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ABSTRACT

It was not until the end of the 1970s that public debate on the problem of functional illiteracy among adults began in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Even afterward, Germans were reluctant to admit that illiteracy was a problem in their country. Literacy education efforts began at the local level, and the first national conference on adult literacy was held in Bremen in 1981. After increasing focus on the relationship between illiteracy and unemployment, German adult educational institutions began to respond to specific educational needs. As a result, literacy instruction is now offered by almost 280 adult educational institutions. The development of literacy education in the FRG can be divided into experimental, consolidation, and transition phases. Since the late 1970s literacy provision has grown rapidly, although significant differences still exist between program offerings in rural and urban areas. A qualitative improvement in the respect accorded to conditions for illiterate individuals has accompanied this growth in literacy instruction. The following program elements may be said to characterize adult literacy programs in the FRG: contact to students, initial advice to students, consideration of the learning situation of illiterate adults, development of specific methods of teaching reading and writing, and provision of sociopedagogical support and counseling. Efforts are underway to expand the areas served by literacy programs, integrate numeracy and other basic skills into literacy programs, and improve existing programs through a research and development effort. (141 references in English and German). (MN)

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FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY AND LITERACY PROVISION IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Elisabeth Fuchs-Brüninghoff
Wolfgang Kreft
Ulrike Kropp

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FOREWORD

This case study on functional literacy and basic education in the Federal Republic of Germany is part of the research and development programmes of the Unesco Institute for Education (UIE) that are aimed at acquiring a fuller understanding of contemporary educational conceptualization and practices within the broad framework of lifelong education. Some of the important characteristics of the concept of lifelong education, such as flexibility in the content and process of learning, integrating learning more closely with life through nonformal and informal provisions for education and development, and creating learning opportunities for the growth and progress of all according to their specific learning needs, are directly or indirectly exemplified by this study.

The problems of functional illiteracy and basic education that have been rediscovered by developed countries in recent years have generated the need to work out suitable solutions and create appropriate provision for learning arrangements in a non-conventional and innovative manner. The analysis of the pertinent experience therefore serves a dual purpose of understanding the principles of lifelong education on the one hand and the development of suitable practices in the field of functional literacy and basic education in developed countries on the other.

Viewed within the framework of lifelong education, literacy is shown in this study to be much more than the acquisition of reading and writing skills. While it is important to keep in mind that the possession of these skills enables the individual to carry out everyday tasks and to go about one's daily routine more confidently, it is equally important to recognize that reading and writing skills contribute to wider developmental goals, namely, the acquisition by the individual of those basic functional skills necessary for fulfilling his own self-determined objectives as a responsible member of society. Literacy, therefore, is not an end in itself; it is

essentially an intermediary and instrumental goal, and thus serves as a means of achieving a higher and better quality of life. It provides the individual with opportunities for self-improvement and social participation and develops in the individual the ability and confidence to adapt to the ever-changing needs of contemporary society.

The authors have drawn on their extensive experience in the field of literacy and have succeeded in presenting an informative and valuable account of the services and learning opportunities provided in the Federal Republic of Germany for different levels of literacy with a focus on functional literacy and basic education. Beginning with the international context of illiteracy and its recognition as a social problem, the authors examine the development of literacy provision in the Federal Republic and conclude by outlining its achievements and future prospects.

It is clear from the study that two factors in particular play an important part in effective learning provision for functional literacy and basic education. First, it is essential that due attention be paid to the specific setting within which such provision is to be offered. Organizers of initial and functional literacy courses must consider carefully aspects such as apparent causes of illiteracy, public reaction to illiterates, the difficulties illiterates face in society and their self-concept as a result of their inadequate skills in reading and writing. Second, it is essential that skilled animators and learners work together harmoniously in an atmosphere of mutual respect. It is only in this way that this category of learners can acquire the confidence needed to move from the protective atmosphere of the adult education centre to the successful fulfilling of real-life tasks.

I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to Ms Elisabeth Fuchs-Brüninghoff, Dr Wolfgang Kreft and Ms Ulrike Kropp for working intensively on the preparation of this case study, and to Mr A.Mahinda Ranaweera and Dr Adama Ouane for developing and coordinating this study. I would also like to express my thanks to Dr Frederick Gardiner and Mr Michael Green for editing the final version of the manuscript, and to Ms Wera Tränckler for typing of the camera-ready copy.

Ravindra H. Dave
Director
Unesco Institute for Education

Chapter 1

OBSERVATIONS ON ILLITERACY IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The history of illiteracy has long been regarded as the history of the social and educational problems of developing countries. Illiteracy will doubtlessly remain a serious problem for developing countries in coming decades despite the fact that numerous efforts have been made to reduce rates of illiteracy, that notable advances have been achieved with respect to increasing the level of public participation in formal and non-formal educational activities, and that more and more people are becoming aware of the problem of illiteracy.

Developed countries, for their part, have been slow to realize that they too face the same problem. This realization has come about in a number of ways and, in some cases, not without a certain degree of reluctance. Before looking more closely at the circumstances in which realization of the problem of illiteracy has occurred in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and at the subsequent provision made to further literacy, it is considered appropriate to make several observations concerning the apparent causes of illiteracy in developed countries.

There is one school of thought that ascribes the existence of illiteracy in developed countries to the decline of the written language, brought about by the all-pervasive influence of mass-communication technologies such as television, radio and video. The increase since the Second World War in the number of European households owning a television set is cited as evidence to support this claim, and it is true that today virtually every household in nations such as the United Kingdom, France and the Federal Republic of Germany is equipped with television and radio. Mass-communication technologies have had an undeniable influence on public and social life, but can they be said to be the sole cause of illiteracy? A definitive answer to this

question would of course be extremely difficult to arrive at. The present writers, however, are of the opinion that the influence of television and radio is being greatly overplayed, for the complexity of social life and communication surely cannot be reduced to a single explanatory factor. While research into changes in personal and social attitudes brought about by the mass media has shown that television and radio are indeed factors which *reinforce* change, mass communication is not the sole *cause* of new trends in social and individual behaviour (*see* Klapper, 1960; Thoveron, 1971; Katz *et al*, 1974).

Efforts at identifying the causes of illiteracy in developed countries also focus on the development of new technology, particularly computerized forms of production and communication. The computer industry is a fast-growing industrial sector in developed countries, and will continue to expand rapidly in the future, not only in terms of industrial production but also in the field of personal computing. To what extent computers will impact on people's attitudes towards written communication is uncertain; what *is* certain, however, is that the development of computerized forms of information and communication cannot be cited as being the cause of the illiteracy which exists today.

The existence of illiteracy in developed countries is also linked to the question of the motivation of the individual to learn and acquire skills. A number of influences are said to be responsible for a loss in motivation, e.g. the passive, non-participatory attitudes of young people which some attribute to affluence in society. More critical assessments point to the difficulty individuals have in coping with the flood of information to which they are exposed and the complexity of modern life. Although these factors are doubtlessly significant, it is difficult to sustain the claim that the cultural and technological developments in a society directly influence individual motivation to acquire reading and writing skills.

Economic factors, particularly unemployment, are also said to be responsible for illiteracy. Surveys on economic developments in developed countries over the past few years clearly show an enormous increase in productivity and, at the same time, a rise in unemployment. (The unemployment rates for the FRG are shown in the third chapter.) Again, we would maintain that there is no direct correlation between unemployment and illiteracy. Illiteracy does not result from unemployment; rather, unemployment exposes the fact that illiteracy exists.

Finally, there is the relationship between illiteracy and the role of the compulsory school system. When illiteracy first became a topic of discussion, many pointed to the school system as proof that there was no illiteracy problem. Today, however, the school system is coming under fire because of this very fact. In our opinion, both views attach excessive importance to the role of the school system. Although the vast majority of illiterates in developed countries have had a certain amount of compulsory school education, this fact reveals nothing about the particular circumstances of school attendance. Clearly, although for some pupils the time spent at school may not have been particularly rewarding, it cannot be said that school is solely responsible for the social problems of certain groups in our society. Many of those now considered functionally illiterate come from socially and financially insecure families. Thus, their failure at school can be attributed to low self-esteem resulting from insufficient encouragement at home.

It is our hope that this study will contribute to a better understanding of the problem of adult illiteracy in developed countries, although due consideration must be given to the fact that research into literacy and illiteracy is in its infancy. It has been possible, however, to provide a detailed analysis of the factors involved in adult illiteracy and point out the conditions necessary for adult literacy provision to contribute successfully to an individual's education. This study of functional illiteracy and literacy provision in the FRG will therefore attempt to:

- trace the development from the discovery of illiteracy in the FRG to the debate on literacy as a social problem;

- examine, within the framework of lifelong education, the links between educational concepts, social and economic conditions, individual factors and literacy;

- reflect on the development of literacy provision over the last six years and examine the major operational elements of the literacy programme;

- provide material and suggestions for comparative studies on literacy in developed countries and promote the debate on literacy provision on an international platform.

Chapter 2

NATIONAL AWARENESS OF ILLITERACY AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF LITERACY

1. Illiteracy as a Social Problem

At the same time as a national adult literacy campaign sponsored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was beginning in the United Kingdom in 1975, a general realization of the problem of illiteracy in the FRG did not exist. In fact, it was not until the end of the seventies that a public debate on the problem of adults with an inadequate standard of literacy began. The reasons for this belated realization of the problem of adult illiteracy can only be found by examining the social and educational situation of the time. In retrospect, however, one can point to three factors which help to explain why educational experts and the public in general were loath to accept that adult illiteracy existed.

First, one must look at the outstanding industrial performance of the FRG. The economic progress and technological development made since its foundation in 1949 have had an enormous influence on the everyday lives of German citizens: nearly half the population own a car; more than 90 per cent of households are equipped with television and radio; high technology is being used in many sectors of private and public communication. Many of those who refused to believe in the existence of adult illiteracy justified their stance by pointing to the technological progress that had been made and argued that the link which had been established between a high rate of illiteracy and a relatively low industrial status, although applicable to certain developing countries, surely could not apply to the FRG. Despite the dubious nature of this line of argumentation, its effectiveness in the public debate cannot be denied.

Second, there is the fact that for a long time in the FRG school attendance has been compulsory for all children. The percentage of persons who for various reasons have never been to school is indeed very small, although the percentage may be slightly above average amongst those of school-going age at the time of the Second World War. However, the plight of 50 or 60 year-olds today was not the reason why educational experts began speaking of the problem of adult illiteracy. They claimed that, within the compulsory school system, a certain percentage of children will inevitably fail to learn how to read or write either properly or indeed completely. To understand the far-reaching implications of this statement one must bear in mind the fact that compulsory school attendance has, since the beginning of the century, been considered proof enough that illiteracy has been eradicated. (It follows that, in the eyes of most Germans, nearly the total population, i.e. about 62 million citizens, is able to read and write.)

Third, the very nature of adult education in the FRG needs to be considered. Adult education provision is not only organized along community lines but is also provided by trade unions, the two principal religious bodies, state agencies, employers' associations and private enterprise. According to the particular objectives of these institutions, continuing education for adults is offered as vocational training, on-the-job training or general education. *Illiteracy, therefore, was a completely new phenomenon for the adult education system.* Opportunities for adults to improve their knowledge of the German language obviously exist, but the curriculum of these courses focuses on the acquisition of highly specialized skills concerning the orthography or stylistic aspects of the German language. Most of these courses are provided by the community adult education institutes.

2. Awareness of the Problem

The existence of adult illiteracy in the FRG, then, although being a disturbing possibility, was denied largely for the three reasons outlined above. Nevertheless, a small number of adult education institutes initiated literacy programmes in the late seventies, and within a few years the demand for such programmes quickly grew. One outcome of this growth in the number of literacy programmes and concomitant take-up was that a more concrete discussion about adult illiteracy was able to take place. Initial reports from programme organizers indicated

that illiteracy could not simply be put down to unusual circumstances, thereby creating feelings of guilt amongst those affected by illiteracy. Most of the students who enrolled in literacy programmes had embarked on schooling in the usual way. Their subsequent failure at school had been a result of various specific factors, e.g. inadequate learning opportunities and troublesome family circumstances. From the very beginning it has been extremely difficult to identify the precise nature of the relationship between school experience, family circumstances and general social difficulties and illiteracy. For the individual affected, illiteracy is not an abstract condition, but very much a real handicap which prevents him from participating fully in social life. Two factors which have been borne out by research conducted in the early eighties (Oswald/Müller, 1982) give insights into the relationship referred to above. Firstly, although the social conditions experienced during childhood and adolescence by adult illiterates will have differed in no great measure from those experienced by other underprivileged groups in society, there will have been a significant difference as far as psychological aspects are concerned. Secondly, the circumstances in life of adult illiterates will have differed from those of other adults in similar social conditions.

The concrete level of discussion which had begun to take place allowed illiteracy to be viewed as a social phenomenon, and it gradually came to be accepted that illiteracy, in addition to being a problem for certain developing countries, also affected highly industrialized societies with compulsory school systems and provision for various types of adult education. Before examining how literacy provision became a part of adult education in the FRG, it is appropriate to classify the different levels of literacy.

3. Levels of Literacy

The existence of illiteracy having been established, the question then was to arrive at an adequate working definition for the phenomenon.

Illiteracy is technically defined as 'the inability to read and write'. In practice, however, illiteracy signifies that a person is unable to identify words or indeed single letters. This latter understanding of the term illiteracy is also less than adequate, for it implies a comparison between an illiterate adult and a child's condition before it starts to learn to read

and write. Such an understanding of illiteracy overlooks two important considerations which are interrelated and which require that a more complex view of the problem be taken. Firstly, there is the matter of *adult* literacy, and secondly there is the matter of *functional* literacy.

A first step towards a fuller understanding of adult literacy is to determine what may be referred to as levels of linguistic competence. Although it is generally difficult to describe the discrete abilities of an individual, it is possible to distinguish three categories of linguistic competence amongst adults who have problems with reading and writing:

- First, there are those who are capable of writing their own name and address, who recognize a certain number of letters of the alphabet and are also able to identify these letters when they occur in a word or a short sentence. Short words and words which are frequently encountered can often be assigned to photographs or drawings.

- Second, there are those whose ability to read is slightly better than their ability to write. These adults can read words which they come across in their everyday lives and they generally understand short written messages. The construction of their own written words is often a difficult task because letters as well as parts of a word are frequently left out.

- Third, there are those whose abilities are much more advanced, especially as far as reading is concerned. These adults are often able to read a newspaper slowly, but they feel very inhibited in their writing owing to their perceived shortcomings in this area. These adults do not for the most part use the written word as a medium of communication.

It is tempting to assign the different categories to the reading or writing ages of children. This attempt has often been made by studies analyzing the level of reading and writing abilities of adult illiterates. From our point of view, this not only neglects the fundamental differences between children and adults in the process of the acquisition of reading and writing skills, but it also denies the transitory character of categories or classification units. The three categories mentioned here only serve as an initial diagnosis both for the student and the animator. They are useful as starting points, but they do not accurately describe the learning abilities of an individual. One can go so far as to say that many of the

students on first coming to a literacy class underestimate their real skills. The group of adults whose competence can be equated with the abilities as described for the first category is considerably smaller than the other two groups. The majority of the adults currently attending literacy classes in the FRG can be described as persons who can at least read short texts and who experience a varying degree of difficulty in writing a message.

Despite the problems involved in classifying the various levels of literacy, it has become obvious that effective support for adults can only be provided by new programmes suited to the special needs of the target group. These efforts began on a larger scale in the early eighties. The starting points and the different steps towards a more extensive provision of literacy programmes will be explored in the next section.

4. Local and Regional Efforts

"The right to read and write" was first postulated at a local level where activities had been initiated to help illiterates.

The organizers and animators involved in these activities were largely responsible for the fact that illiteracy became a topic of discussion. In addition, newspapers became interested in the problem and began to publish reports on the situation of illiterates in the FRG. As a result, illiteracy came to be discussed within an increasing number of city councils. Discussion at the local level was thus an important starting point for both political and educational activities, and with more than 60 per cent of adult continuing education being organized by local adult education institutes, the signs looked good for the provision of immediate help to those requiring it within the framework of adult continuing education. In Bremen, for example, literacy became part of the educational programme of the adult education system. In West Berlin the local government financed the literacy activities of the education institutes and of an association of educationists. Further initiatives were started in the western part of the country in the industrial areas in and around cities such as Düsseldorf and Frankfurt.

Apart from the financial aspects of literacy provision, the political argument of organizers and animators was that democratic participation, as guaranteed by the Constitution of

the FRG, is not possible for those who have inadequate reading and writing skills: they find it extremely difficult to understand the various voting procedures; with regard to civil rights, they are severely handicapped by the problems they have with reading and writing (e.g. dealing with municipal authorities, job centres etc.; they experience restrictions with regard to participation in their social and professional lives).

At the beginning, only a handful of organizers and animators succeeded in establishing adult-literacy programmes at a local level. Within a few years, however, the number of institutes offering adult literacy classes had increased rapidly - in 1982 they numbered 120. During the period 1979-1982, efforts to draw the public's attention to the problem of adult illiteracy were intensified. Some of the state governments began to address the problem and, as these are responsible for formal and nonformal educational provision, the foundation was laid for a general political discussion on adult illiteracy. In Lower Saxony and Northrhine-Westfalia, the state governments provided special funding for literacy programmes within the framework of the Adult Education Act, and the publicity given to the question of adult illiteracy by the news media (particularly the press and radio) meant that the attention of the public was drawn to the problem at local, state and national levels. Furthermore, whereas in the past organizers and animators involved in programmes had worked in comparative isolation, focusing their attention on the provision and financing of their respective courses, they now began to establish contact with others involved in this type of work and their thoughts turned increasingly to matters such as conceptual and methodological aspects, the training of animators and the provision of learning materials.

5. National Cooperation

The first national conference on adult literacy was held in Bremen in 1981, and a number of groups actively involved in literacy provision (education institutes, private associations, penal authorities etc.) were thus able to both convey their own experiences and learn of the work of others. The Bremen conference was also a starting point for international cooperation with other European countries. The close cooperation and the exchange of experience at a national level was intensified when the Ministry of Education and Science financed a research and development project on literacy at the Education Services

Centre of the German Adult Education Association (DVV) in 1982.

Since 1982, the political and educational discussion on the problem of adult illiteracy has acquired a new impetus. Provision for literacy has steadily increased and, according to a survey carried out in 1985, the number of adult education institutes providing literacy programmes has reached 280, with an enrolment of more than 6,000 students. Although provision is lacking in several states, literacy has become an integral part of adult education, with the bulk of the work being carried out by community adult education institutes organized under the aegis of the German Adult Education Association. In some areas, the religious communities are beginning to organize and provide literacy programmes in close cooperation with local adult education institutes. In Cologne, for example, more than 15 different associations share with an educational association to provide literacy courses for unemployed workers. Several other cities support literacy programmes within the framework of adult continuing education or special provision aimed at young unskilled workers. The discussion on literacy has also been emphasized by a series of televised public information 'spots' on literacy and the problem of illiteracy. Broadcast on Channel 3, this series was inspired by the success in the United Kingdom of a similar venture undertaken by the BBC in 1975.

6. The International Context

The political discussion on adult illiteracy that began in the FRG in the late seventies is not only continuing but has become an inseparable component of the international debate on literacy in developed and developing countries. Having established an international commission on adult illiteracy, the member states of the European Community resolved, at a general meeting of their ministries of education in April, 1984, to bring about a reduction in the number of illiterates throughout the region. Furthermore, the problem of illiteracy both in developing and developed countries was emphasized at UNESCO's Fourth International Conference on Adult Education. In his closing address, the Director General stated that the "number of countries where massive literacy campaigns have been carried out in the last few years is significantly larger than in the past. Despite the obstacles still to be overcome, many of these countries, like others which are about to follow suit, look forward to the eradication of illiteracy in a relatively short time.

Moreover, a large number of industrialized countries that now take very seriously the problems of functional illiteracy feel more directly concerned by a phenomenon whose worldwide dimensions are thus revealed in their full light".

The right to read and write is one important element of autonomy in human life and responsible participation in society. In the FRG, as in other developed countries, the initial debate on illiteracy as a social *problem* is gradually being transformed into a discussion on literacy as a social *responsibility* of adult education.

An examination of adult continuing education in various developed countries reveals that literacy provision is being considered more and more as a necessary element of educational activities. Education authorities, experts and practitioners have been forced to admit that illiteracy is not merely confined to developing countries. However, the fact that a recognition of the problem of illiteracy has come about in a variety of ways throughout the developed world means that the way literacy provision is integrated into adult continuing education also varies, and often to a considerable degree.

The importance which is today being attached in the developed countries to literacy provision depends on several factors. In some countries, literacy provision had been begun then stopped after a period of time. In other countries, a more continuous provision can be observed. Finally, there are countries in which literacy provision is a relatively new phenomenon. Undoubtedly, this can only serve as a general description of the situation in developed countries; further research will be necessary to establish to what extent countries are united by common problems and the extent to which these problems can be resolved by the mutual exchange of concepts and ideas.

In order to illustrate the international context of literacy provision in developed countries we would like to quote a few recent examples of literacy provision - that the countries mentioned here are confined to ones from Western Europe is attributable to the developments which have taken place in the field of literacy in these countries. However, these individual developments highlight the need for stronger international cooperation in combatting illiteracy.

The development of adult literacy provision in the United

Kingdom is an example of the transformation of a vigorous campaign into continuous literacy provision. In 1975, the BBC followed up the publicity campaign it had conducted with a series of televised programmes. Whereas in 1973 the estimated number of adults enrolled in adult literacy courses was in the region of 5,000, there were at the start of the campaign some 15,000 adults enrolled; one year later, the figure had risen to 50,000. Today literacy and basic skills courses are provided for about 110,000 adults. For Western Europe, the British experience is of particular note because of the central role played at the beginning by television. In order to guarantee the continuity of provision various strategies for national coordination among the local educational authorities were established. Since 1980, the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) has been responsible for the development of provision for literacy and basic skills acquisition.

In other countries, continuous literacy provision has developed more gradually. In *The Netherlands* a network for literacy provision has existed since about 1975. According to a survey conducted in 1984, literacy courses have been provided for 10,000 Dutch citizens and about 12,000 foreigners. Since 1980, subsidies have been provided by the government in order to support local projects. At the national level, the educational centre in Amersfoort is responsible for the coordination of literacy provision.

In *Belgium*, development has proceeded along two paths. In the Flemish part, literacy provision began in 1979, with national coordination amongst the various projects being conducted from Flanders. 'Alfabetisering Vlaanderen' has coordinated a range of additional literacy activities. In the francophone part of Belgium, four regional organizations joined together in 1983 and established the association 'Lire et écrire'.

Literacy provision in *France* has existed for several years in the context of the social work carried out by the association A.T.D. -Quart Monde and is focused on the so-called 'fringe' groups. The recognition of illiteracy as a national problem is, however, still in its initial stages. The French government has asked a group of experts to examine the problem, and in western France some project organizers have begun to coordinate their activities.

In *Italy*, literacy courses have been organized within the framework of continuing adult education by the trade unions.

Provision continues to exist, but only at a regional level. In *Portugal* and *Spain*, efforts were made to reduce the rates of illiteracy in the early sixties. Since then, however, most of the programmes have been discontinued.

In the context of this study on functional illiteracy and literacy provision in the FRG only a small number of the efforts to combat illiteracy in other developed countries can be highlighted. In addition to those countries mentioned above, for instance, one could point to the enormous depth of experience gained by countries such as Canada and the United States, where the organizational and conceptual framework for adult literacy is every bit as sophisticated as that worked out by those European countries referred to above.

In the next section, we will deal with the relationship between unemployment and the recognition of the problem of adult illiteracy in the FRG. Although pertaining to one particular case, this relationship might well be of significance for other countries with similar sets of circumstances.

Chapter 3

ADULT LITERACY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EDUCATIONAL CONCEPTS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Literacy and Target-group Orientation

The orientation, in an industrialized society, of adult education towards the problems of illiterates, as was the case in the late seventies and early eighties in the FRG, must first be considered within the context of a keener interest generally in work with target groups. This term indicates special social, ethnic or educational groups whose members live under conditions which differ from those of the majority, e.g. they may be socially or educationally disadvantaged, or be from a different cultural background. Older people, unskilled workers, women with little professional experience, young unskilled workers, foreign workers - all these are examples of target groups in the context of adult continuing education. Such groups have avoided adult educational provision or have been significantly underrepresented among students enrolled in adult education. Efforts to integrate target groups into programmes of adult education have been greatly intensified over the past 10 years, and have been directed at fields such as vocational and non-vocational training, community education, training facilities for the unemployed and provision for women and single parents.

When literacy programmes were initiated in the FRG, adult education institutes sought to respond to the specific needs of a target group which had a common lack of reading and writing skills. Moreover, those in this group had for the most part never participated in adult education before; thus the integration of illiterates into programmes was the first and main objective of adult education. It soon became only too clear how limited an individual's participation in a democratic society was without the possession of reading and writing skills, and experience during the last four or five years has shown

that more far-reaching efforts are necessary if the integration of a target group is to be achieved.

2. Literacy and Unemployment

To approach adult illiteracy from the concept of unemployment is to attempt to reveal the economic and social factors which have led to a greater awareness of the problem over the past six or seven years. Illiteracy in the FRG cannot be considered as a completely new phenomenon, although it only became apparent when the economic situation began to change in the late seventies.

The period of stagnation and slow economic growth brought about a drop in the gross national product. The labour market was particularly affected, and from 1980 onwards unemployment began to rise. From under one million unemployed in 1980, the figure rose to over 2.3 million at the end of 1985. The rate of unemployment increased from 3.3 per cent in 1980 to 9.3 per cent in 1985 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Unemployment in the Federal Republic of Germany

1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
889,000	1,272,000	1,833,000	2,258,000	2,266,000	2,300,000
3.3%	4.8%	6.9%	8.4%	8.4%	9.3%

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden

The peak of unemployment in 1985 was nearly as high as that in 1952, i.e. during the great recession after the Second World War. These observations on unemployment, however, do not show the full extent of social and economic consequences for specific groups in our society.

In general, unemployment amongst semi-skilled and unskilled workers is much higher than for skilled workers. In

1985 for instance there was an increase of jobs in the services sector. Whereas credit institutions and insurance companies created more than 200,000 new jobs, building and construction industries experienced virtual stagnation. Thus the chance of finding work requiring lower vocational qualifications was relatively poor in 1985. It seems probable that unskilled or semi-skilled workers will continue to be particularly badly affected by unemployment. One strong indication of this is the duration of unemployment - the number of long-term unemployed has been increasing rapidly. Of those out of work, almost 33 per cent (nearly 750,000 people) are long-term unemployed.

The depressed labour market has greatly affected the possibility of finding a job and of holding on to it. Employers are in a position to select the most qualified applicants for vacant posts. People who cannot read or write are often considered as being unable to meet the demands of a new job. This phenomenon is not new. For many years now chambers of commerce, for example, have complained of the low level of writing skills of trainees. At a time of high unemployment, this factor inevitably affects the selection of workers or trainees for employment.

The problem, however, does not simply lie in finding a job, but in being able to respond to rationalization measures which are taken. Automation affects more or less all economic sectors and often the nature of work; personal and vocational flexibility is thus needed to meet these changes. Moreover, on-the-job training for those employees who have insufficient basic skills is limited.

What is the impact on literacy of the massive increase in unemployment? The British example clearly shows one effect: those affected by illiteracy no longer hide their problems. When the BBC literacy campaign started in 1975, more than one million people were out of work and many of those who asked for help were either unemployed or in danger of losing their jobs. A similar thing happened five years later in the Federal Republic of Germany. As a result of the rise in the level of unemployment, some people tried to find help and therefore turned to institutes of adult education. It is a significant feature of literacy in developed countries that illiterates first have to overcome strong psychological inhibitions for they fear that they will be prejudiced or even discriminated against. In order to confess to having difficulties with reading and writing one must conquer a major psychological barrier.

Indeed, some of those attending literacy classes in the early eighties were reluctant to give their names to the animators or counsellors at adult education institutes. On the one hand they felt the need for help, on the other they were afraid of negative reactions from persons unknown to them.

What is also known is that people attending literacy classes expected to resolve their problems quickly. By acquiring reading and writing skills within a couple of weeks, so they believed, they would improve their chances of finding a job or of participating in job-training programmes provided by the Federal Institute of Labour.

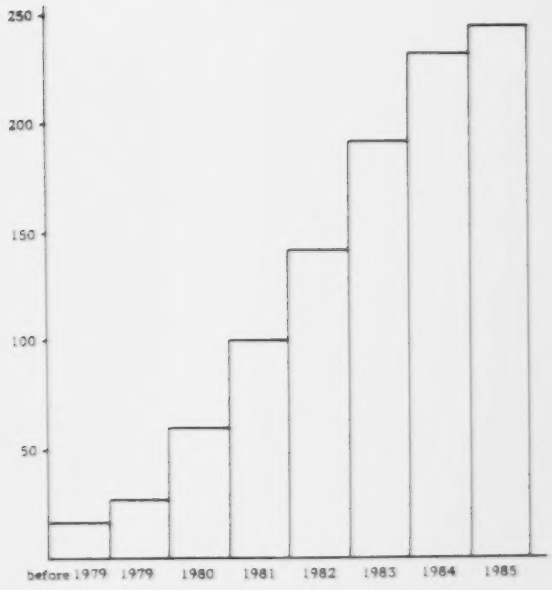
The fact that a growing number of adult education institutes began to provide a variety of literacy courses in the eighties (*see* Figure 1) led to a discussion on literacy and unemployment. Trade unions as well as the Employers Federation began to accept that there was a link between unemployment and literacy. The Federal Institute of Labour, which finances educational programmes for the unemployed, is not however in a position to support literacy programmes, these being considered as part of general education and not of vocational training. Nevertheless, cooperation between the job centres and the adult education institutes has been improved over the past few years especially at the local and regional levels. A greater awareness of the fact that people looking for a job are often also in need of literacy provision can be considered as a first step towards the integration of literacy and vocational training.

To summarize, then, the impact of unemployment on literacy it can be said that, along with an increased awareness of the problem, adult education institutes began to respond to specific educational needs. Literacy provision is now offered by almost 280 adult education institutes in the FRG, and job centres have become more attuned to the problem. However, the acquisition of reading and writing skills is only one means of contributing to one's personal development and of fulfilling the vocational requirements which hopefully will lead to finding employment.

Figure 1

Adult Education Institutes Offering Literacy Provision

(excluding penal institutions)



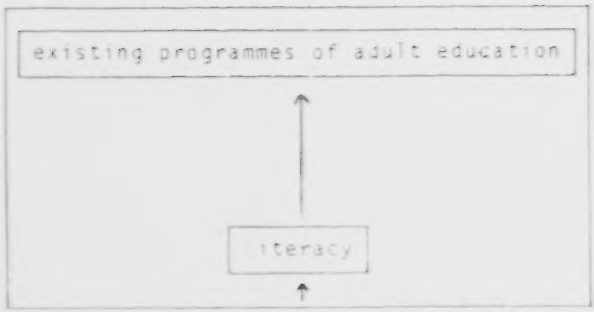
Source: Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle / Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV)

3. Literacy and Basic Education

An examination of educational programmes for adult illiterates reveals that many participants seek further learning opportunities, e.g. in numeracy, geography and history, and also express their wish to master basic techniques relating to information gathering or oral skills. In addition, participants seek to develop their basic practical skills, often to help them benefit from social achievements. Young people, for example, often request help and guidance in order to pass the driving test. Educational programmes which provide opportunities for acquiring basic skills are still in their beginning phase. Provision for the acquisition of basic functional skills, called *basic education*, mostly exists alongside literacy provision. However, it can be assumed that people who have achieved a basic level of literacy but who feel the need to acquire other basic skills, take advantage of basic education provision as well. In this perspective, basic educatic i is the link between literacy and existing forms of adult education as provided up to now by adult education institutes or other educational associations in the FRG.

Figure 2

Literacy and Adult Education



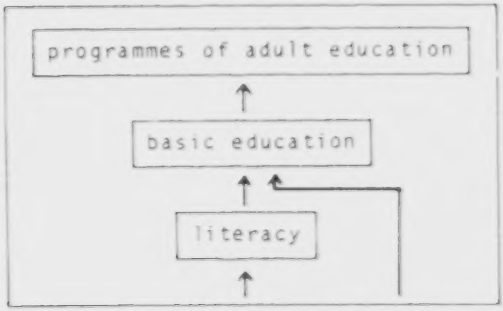
Adult education institutes in the FRG provide formal and nonformal educational programmes. In most cases, a certain fundamental knowledge is necessary to attend the various pro-

grammes. Literacy provision is one way of preparing students for continuing education.

Basic education is an attempt to integrate to a greater extent those who would not normally participate in adult education. The idea is not only that basic education should give access to existing adult education programmes for those who are illiterate, but also that it should enable other individuals to prepare for specific kinds of adult education (evening classes, vocational training courses etc.) and to other types of non-formal educational provision.

Figure 3

Literacy, Basic Education and Adult Education



It is obviously difficult to circumscribe the contents of basic education programmes: on the one hand, their wide range gives individuals the opportunity to pursue what interests them; on the other, there is a risk that basic education may be mainly determined by the needs of a particular society. The difficulty in achieving this balance was expressed as early as 1972, at the Third World Conference on Adult Education in Tokyo.

The way basic education develops will be determined very much by the fact that "the individual's own circumstances change and because changing economic and social circumstances reveal new needs". This statement from the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit in the United Kingdom concerning developments for the future indicates that a final definition of basic education

is only possible if it can mediate between the individual's needs and societal change.

An important characteristic of illiterates is that they often feel alienated from other individuals, despite the fact that are usually successful in hiding their shortcomings. Indeed, the adoption of 'avoidance strategies' not only plays an important part in everyday life, but influences how the illiterate sets about his daily routine. Literacy therefore requires that due attention be paid to the social and psychological conditions of adult illiterates.

A study, carried out in 1982, underlined how professional and personal needs were being frustrated by the inability to read and write. Many of the adults interviewed for the study were afraid of losing both their jobs and their reputations. For example, a worker whose job was to deliver coal to households did not tell his boss that he was unable to read the order forms. Furthermore, some adults often pretended to friends or work colleagues that they had forgotten their glasses or resorted to other pretexts in order to avoid having to read or write.

The social and psychological conditions of adult illiterates are clearly interrelated. In another study, which focused on the self-image of adult illiterates in the FRG, it was obvious that many students interviewed greatly underestimated their learning abilities, even after a year of attending a course at an adult education institute. As illiteracy is a stigma to a greater or lesser extent, many illiterates experience alienation and anxiety.

The psychological make-up of adult illiterates is comprised of both their present and their former experience. Illiteracy is an integral part of the ethos of the individual unfortunate enough to be illiterate, and reflects an inability to cope with many of life's problems. Moreover, the negative self-image which this creates in the individual is continually reinforced by everyday events in the individual's life.

4. Literacy and Lifelong Education

The rapidly changing aspirations and goals in modern society are a source of disequilibrium for those who do not possess the necessary basic functional skills. The knowledge

explosion and the increasing complexity of social life present a challenge to everyone, but they are particularly problematical for those who have difficulties in adapting themselves to the ever-changing needs of society. If appropriate learning opportunities are not provided, the gap between highly educated and unskilled persons might become even greater. For highly industrialized societies, this danger becomes more and more real.

Literacy and basic education, therefore, are essential elements of adult education. Access of adults to literacy and basic education must be facilitated, and this can only be achieved if the acquisition of basic skills is no longer considered as the sole responsibility of primary-school education. The fact that illiteracy has become a problem for the FRG clearly shows that the existing educational system is not fully able, for a number of reasons, to cope with the educational needs of specific groups in our society. Once the idea is removed that only school-based education is responsible for the imparting of basic skills, literacy and basic education can be integrated into a concept of lifelong education.

The provision of learning facilities for adults in literacy and basic skills in the context of lifelong education is not simply, however, the extension of school-based education. As already pointed out during the 1977 General Conference of Unesco in Nairobi, the development of adult education, in the context of lifelong education

> "is necessary as a means of achieving a more rational and more equitable distribution of educational resources between young people and adults, and between different social groups, and of ensuring better understanding and more effective collaboration between the generations and greater political, social and economic equality between social groups and between sexes (...)" [1]

These general recommendations also imply that coping with difficulties on a basic level cannot be regarded as a sufficient conceptual framework for the development of educational programmes. Experience with literacy programmes has shown that, along with the acquisition of literacy skills, emphasis must be placed on the attainment of qualities for one's personal or collective life, qualities which are central to lifelong education, namely:

- intrapsychic stability
- emotional robustness
- inward youthfulness
- capacity for responsible choice
- social commitment
- personal commitment
- acquisition and renewal of knowledge [2]

An individual's initial decision to participate in programmes for adult literacy or basic education is often motivated by practical circumstances, e.g. parents wanting to help their children with their school work, or those who feel it will benefit their working life. If a successful learning process is to be achieved it is important, however, to consider personal ambitions and the social conditions which prevail for the individual.

5. Literacy and the Concept of Education for All

Literacy is not an end in itself, but a means to a better life. The meaning of literacy is thus connected with the personal ambitions and the social conditions of an individual. Viewed as a part of adult continuing edcuation, literacy provision is a step towards the equality of opportunity for individuals who, for various reasons, have not had unhindered access to professional opportunities or social participation. Moreover, illiterates do not profit from existing adult education provision: indeed, for the most part they avoid all forms of adult education. A vicious circle is thereby created for those who already live under insecure conditions, both psychologically and socially.

A fundamental concept of literacy and basic skills provision in the framework of adult continuing education consists, therefore, in guaranteeing the adult equal opportunities and social participation. In adopting this concept, however, it is necessary to consider its broader implications.

Considered in its widest sense, the concept of education for all encompasses a political dimension. The recognition that illiteracy exists, referred to in the first chapter, is merely the first step towards practical efforts. Political authorities

in the FRG acknowledge that basic skills provision is necessary, that efforts should be made to improve the quality of life of illiterates, and that organizational arrangements should be worked out in order to provide learning facilities. However, the important and often controversial question is whether financial support for such facilities should come from the communities, the state governments or the federal government. Responsibility for education in the FRG is shared between a number of different authorities. Nevertheless, it is only possible to implement the concept of education for all if it is supported by political will.

The concept of education for all also encompasses attitudes towards adult continuing education. Although it is commonly accepted that education improves the social and professional conditions of an individual in a rapidly changing society, the question of how to integrate into adult continuing education individuals who often suffer most from the effects of social change remains a difficult one to answer. It is by no means sufficient to consider simply the organization and financing of programmes. The fact that there are still a large number of people in the FRG who, despite their problems, keep away from adult education reveals the gulf that exists between the individual and institutionalized forms of education. A mutual rapprochement is only possible if attitudes change, both on the part of individuals and on the part of the organizers: individuals should acquire from as early an age as possible an appreciation of the value of continued learning and organizers of adult education programmes should adopt a high degree of flexibility in their approach.

A third important aspect of the concept of education for all pertains to the elements of an overall programme. Acquisition of skills and knowledge undoubtedly remains an important part of practical efforts, but it would be a fundamental mistake if adult continuing education particularly for individuals who do not normally participate in adult education, were considered as a type of formal training. Literacy provision and basic education must respond to an individual's needs with recourse to such components as counselling and advice, definition of the learning situation within the group, training opportunities, reflection on the group process, socio-pedagogical assistance, and mutual help. Thus, education for all can only be achieved if its contents are developed and defined by animators and students cooperating together harmoniously in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

In requiring that educational policy, attitudes of potential learners and organizers, and the content of learning be changed, education for all comes up against a number of obstacles, despite the fact that its objectives are largely agreed upon. To understand what these obstacles are, it is necessary to consider briefly the history of the concept of education for all and the interrelation between educational programmes and social development.

Education for all has been discussed mainly in the context of provision for target groups. As a contribution to the achievement of social justice, adult education has tried to respond to the needs of individuals who have not participated in programmes of continuing education. The discussion about provision for the socially disadvantaged started in the late sixties, leading to learning opportunities for various groups being greatly increased in the early seventies. This provision continues to exist for immigrants, ethnic minorities, the unemployed, young adults and, in recent years, for illiterates. In the meantime, however, social conditions in the FRG have changed considerably owing to the economic situation and the resultant massive increase in unemployment. The overall effect of this has been to upset the correlation which may have been thought to exist between education and social justice. On the one hand, access to employment through education has become more and more difficult; on the other, more and more people seeking jobs have participated in adult continuing education programmes. In recent years, this duality has meant that personal ambition and the actual prospect of getting a job have grown further and further apart.

Unemployment and adverse social conditions have had a great impact on adult continuing education, particularly on education for target groups. To ascertain their negative consequences one must consider the demands made on adult education by external factors. One such demand relates to the fact that qualifications of various kinds are a prerequisite for finding a job. Educators believe that the effect of this demand is to change the role of adult continuing education, turning it into an agency of selection, control and training for the labour market. They also fear that adult continuing education is losing its proper identity by virtue of the fact that motivation to participate in adult continuing education is largely determined by economic factors and that educational concepts are mainly influenced by formal training programmes.

A second demand made on adult education relates to the changing role of educators, in terms of both their personal role and their perception of the function of adult continuing education. With unemployment creating not only social hardship but also psychological problems (loss of self-esteem, over-anxiety etc.) educators are finding themselves increasingly in the role of therapist when dealing with students.

These same demands are made on literacy provision when conceived of in the perspective of target-group education. As far as the concept of education for all is concerned, there are two opposing views on target-group education and indeed on literacy provision in particular:

> " Target-group education (...) can be perceived as practical, useful and making a contribution to social justice. The contrary view is that such programmes are merely 'band-aid' for endemic social maladies, and that they are therefore contributing to the status quo and to the maintenance of a fundamentally unjust und divided society." (3)

Having considered both objectives and obstacles for the concept of education for all, we will now assess how the concept of education for all might develop in coming years before turning, in the next chapter, to adult literacy provision in the FRG and, in the final chapter, to its achievements and future prospects.

Rapid changes in methods of production and communication brought about by technological development, as well as modifications in individual attitudes created by new needs and aspirations, require that a flexible educational policy be pursued. However, in the context of educational policy flexibility involves the risk that previous guiding concepts may simply be cast aside in order that the way is cleared for an uncritical adaptation to new requirements. An example of this would be if adult education were increasingly to become the domain of vocational or pre-vocational training. The principal role of adult education would thus be reduced to the imparting to students of professional skills. It would also mean that educational programmes for particular social groups were only being provided because these groups are not integrated into professional life. Such a concept would not only serve to divide society into those who have a job and wish to improve their skills and target groups who are not able to respond adequately to the needs of society, but would also restrict the content of educational provision.

As a result of the massive increase in unemployment there has been a general tendency to strengthen vocational training for adults and pre-vocational provision for young people. The impact on educational policy of such a measure has been that the guiding concepts of target-group education - which include the consideration of specific personal, ethnic, cultural and social circumstances - have been greatly influenced by the notion of qualification. As a consequence, serious doubts have been expressed concerning the validity of a target-group orientation in adult continuing education. Furthermore, these doubts also affect literacy and basic education as these are part of the effort to provide educational opportunities within the framework of target-group education.

Before considering the outcome of this discussion, we feel it necessary to assess some proposed new approaches which reject previous concepts of adult education. One mainstream development of recent years is what may be referred to as the *biographical approach*. This approach is not based on the orientation towards so-called target groups as defined by sociological data, previous school education, professional qualifications etc. but focuses on the main everyday events in a student's life and on the way in which students interpret their own circumstances. These interpretations are taken as a means of introducing specific contents of learning into the programme and of reintroducing the individual aspects of learning into the curriculum.

The biographical approach to adult education would appear to be a necessary and complementary element if a rigid view of adult education is to be avoided, especially in respect of people who live under adverse social and personal conditions. It is necessary, however, to maintain both the notion of qualification and the notion of a person's biography, for their integration leads to the concept of general education for adults. In the light of previous experience with target groups and biographical approaches, general education encompasses the need to respond to the psychological and social conditions of learners. This concept requires that programmes of adult continuing education provide opportunities not only for further learning, i.e. for those who have already achieved a certain level of knowledge and who want to improve their knowledge and skills, but also at a basic level. Moreover, the concept of general education must provide different forms of access to learning opportunities, not only by organizing provision, but also by taking into account the individual life experiences of students.

Adult literacy and basic education are a step towards education for all. By participating in general education, students would no longer be considered as one specific target group, but as individuals who need general educational provision with emphasis on different topics. Such a point of view would, on the one hand, bring to an end the discussion on defining target groups, and would also help in the organization of provision; on the other hand, experience with target-group education could be used to provide the full range of learning opportunities in order to avoid completely individualized and atomized approaches in adult continuing education.

Chapter 4

ADULT LITERACY PROVISION IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

1. Development of Literacy Provision: 1980-1985

Description of the Different Phases of Literacy Provision

The development of literacy in the FRG can retrospectively be divided into three phases: the experimental phase, the phase of consolidation and the phase of transition. Although these phases roughly reflect the general development of literacy provision, it is not assumed that all adult education institutes are at the same stage of development.

It was in the late seventies and early eighties that the general public in the FRG first became aware of illiteracy in their own country. Soon afterwards, adult education institutes were confronted with the problem of illiteracy. Although at the beginning relatively few people sought help at adult education institutes, their number rapidly grew. Their common bond was a desperate need to change their circumstances, e.g. they had lost their job, feared they might lose it in view of rising unemployment, or were becoming increasingly affected by the restrictions that illiteracy was imposing on their lives. However, with adult education institutes not adequately prepared for this target group and existing provision not sufficiently well known, it was more or less a matter of chance as to whether a person found an opportunity to acquire literacy skills or not. Only a small number of illiterates - the most determined - therefore managed to find a course to follow.

In attempting to reach illiterates adult education institutes were forced to accept that their organizational structure was inadequate. The publicity usually provided for courses (posters, newspaper advertisements, course timetables etc.) was

largely ignored by illiterates for the simple reason that they were unable to read it. Indeed, it would be true to say that the usual methods of publicity for courses did more to deter illiterates than to encourage them.

Typical of the first phase of literacy provision was the fact that attempts were made to approach the target group. Initial contact with persons or institutions that knew of people with reading and writing problems (social services offices, job centres etc.) were established, and these turned out to be not only necessary but effective. Telephone numbers were made available so that people could ring in and obtain details of courses without obligation, and facilities were laid on to enable potential students to speak in confidence with course organizers.

During this initial phase the conditions for successful literacy provision were relatively unknown, and both organizers and animators were forced to seek answers to a number of vital questions: What teaching method is appropriate for adults learning to write? What materials should be used? How can animators be recruited? What knowledge and skills will they need? On an administrative level, solutions needed to be found to problems such as where the courses should take place, how long they should last and how many adults should be enrolled. It would be wrong to have the impression that answers to such questions were available from the outset and that courses were planned on the basis of rational reflection. On the contrary, literacy courses often started up quite haphazardly and in a way similar, for example, to other language courses; the special requirements for literacy courses were determined more or less by 'trial and error'.

As animators were not able to draw on experience gained in the FRG, they had to turn to the five years of experience afforded by the United Kingdom adult literacy campaign or to literacy campaigns carried out in developing countries. Some animators who were primary school teachers set about teaching adults in the same way that they taught their pupils, and used the same types of materials. Furthermore, it generally proved extremely difficult to apply conceptions and principles from other contexts to courses in literacy. It became clear that both the learning environment and the methods of teaching would need to be consistent with the group seeking help and that they should take into account the differing abilities of members of this group and their adverse social conditions.

In order that interested parties - adult education institutes, private associations, penal institutions etc. - be given the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences, and thus put an end to what up to this time had been isolated efforts on their part, a national conference on adult literacy - the first of its kind - was held in Bremen in 1980. This intensified contact at local and national levels facilitated the establishment of a better-conceived system of literacy provision within adult education institutes as well as a call for political support. Thus, the transition to the second phase, the phase of consolidation, began.

The phase of consolidation can be characterized by a number of features: intense discussion on appropriate teaching methods took place, leading to both conceptual clarification and improved course materials; publicity activities were stepped up; the training of animators was carried out; institutional arrangements (course organization, facilities etc.) were worked out. Since 1982, this process has been initiated and supported largely by the literacy project organized by the Education Services Centre of the German Adult Education Association (DVV). At the political level, both nationally and internationally, literacy became a topic for discussion and limited financial support for literacy programmes was provided. Organizers intensified their contact both with persons or institutions able to act as mediators between target groups and adult education institutes, and with the local press in order to make their courses more known to illiterates. Cooperation between a number of adult education institutes within a particular region was examined, the results proving to be worthwhile. Animators were able to benefit from training courses as well as assimilate well thought out teaching methods and ideas for various kinds of learning materials. Illiterates themselves were able to benefit from smaller groups and the fact that courses were increasingly free of charge.

In this phase of consolidation disbelief that a nation as developed as the FRG could have an illiteracy problem gave way to considerations of how best to tackle it. At the same time it was becoming evident that literacy provision involved much more than the teaching of reading and writing. Because of the social problems of illiterates, their failure to acquire the necessary writing skills during their time at school and the resulting feelings of anxiety, it was clear that additional measures needed to be taken. Such measures could be implemented in and outside course time. Counselling both before and during

the course (aimed at overcoming learning difficulties) as well as socio-pedagogical assistance enhanced the literacy programme. Owing to increased demand, additional courses (e.g. ones in basic arithmetical operations) later became necessary.

An adult education institute could manage a larger literacy programme only in close cooperation with other institutes and associations. However, both provincially and nationally, this turned out to be more difficult than had been anticipated. Nevertheless, it is clearly necessary for adult education institutes to work together, not only to exchange solutions to common problems (and thereby avoid mistakes being repeated) but also to develop new forms of provision appropriate for the target group. Furthermore, concerted effort by institutes adds greater weight to a demand for increased financial support.

Working out what additional measures are necessary, making efforts to integrate basic skills provision and literacy into the existing adult education programme; endeavouring to offer literacy provision for all that need it, not only in urban but also in less accessible parts of the country; striving for effective cooperation - all these are typical features of the present phase of transition. This phase coincides with the end of the literacy project, which is being superseded by a project on basic education. At this juncture, the question of the causes of illiteracy again raises itself, but this time as a starting point for the inclusion of preventive measures in a concept of literacy and basic education.

Surveys on the Development of Literacy Provision - Results of an Empirical Study

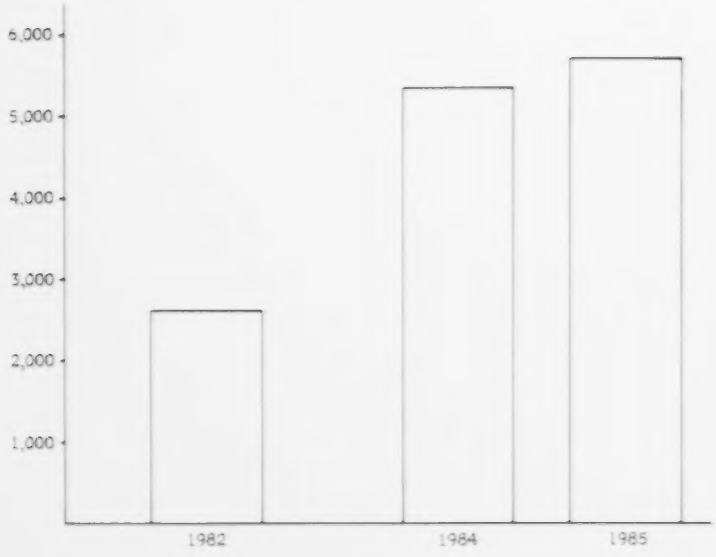
In the spring of each year from 1983 to 1985, the literacy project conducted surveys on the scope and structure of literacy programmes by means of questionnaires completed at adult education institutes. The following results of the study, based on nearly 700 valid questionnaires, serve to describe the development of literacy provision in support of what has been written above.

One can only estimate the total number of illiterates in the FRG. However, the number of illiterates who attended courses can be determined with reasonable accuracy. The increasing number of students is furthermore an indication of the demand for these courses and the extent to which the provision

has reached the target group. Figure 4 illustrates this development.

Figure 4

Participants in Literacy Courses



Source: Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle / Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV)

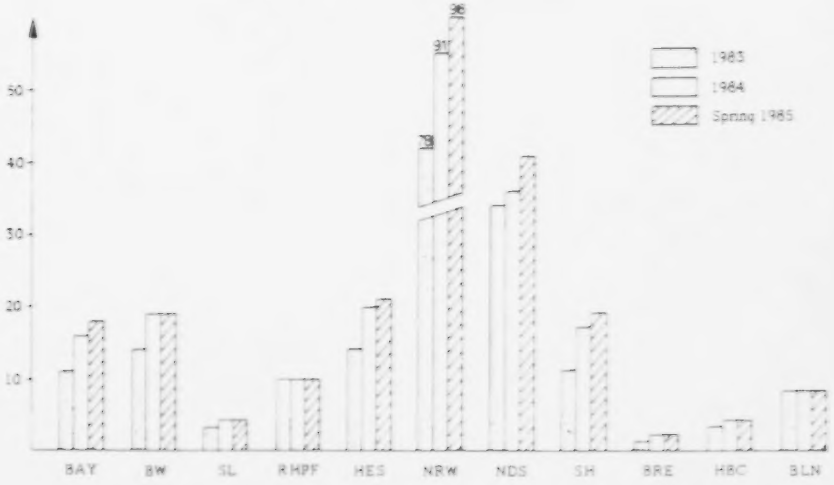
The demand becomes obvious in view of the fact that the number of participants more than doubled in the period from 1982 to 1985. Recent reports from organizers of literacy provision have shown that wherever there is an appropriate provision for literacy courses, the interest in these courses increases rather than decreases. In 1986 more than 6,000 illiterates are estimated to be taking courses.

According to Figure 5, 242 adult education institutes (31 penal institutions can be added to this total) were offering literacy courses in spring 1985. The data clearly show that the number of institutions providing literacy courses increased in nearly all German states. In Bremen, Hamburg and West Berlin the number of students increased despite the fact that the number of institutes offering literacy provision remained the same.

Figure 5

Adult Education Institutes with Literacy Provision

(according to federal states)



Source: Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle / Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV)

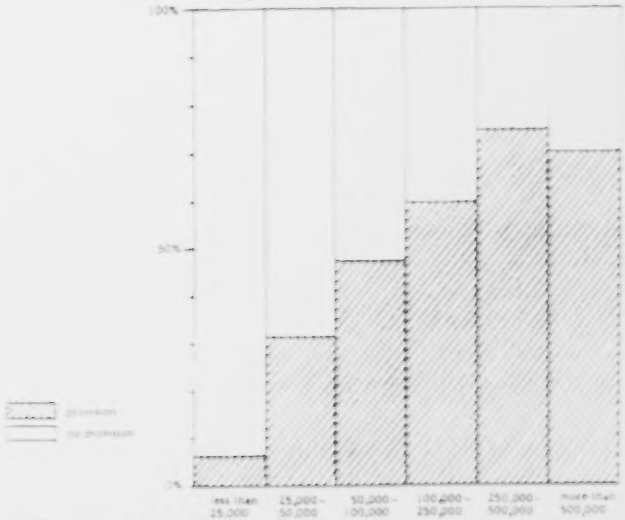
These absolute figures have to be seen in relation to the density of population in the various regions. In Northrhine-Westfalia, for example, there is the largest number of adult

institutes and also the largest number of students; however, it is important to keep in mind the fact that this is also the state with the largest population. If it can be supposed that 0.5 per cent of the population are illiterates - one percentage point below the lowest estimate - and if we further assume an equal distribution across the country, it is possible to determine the percentage of those illiterates presently attending courses. In the whole of the FRG about 2 to 3 per cent of the total number of illiterates attended courses in 1985. However, there are large differences between the states: West Berlin, with 6.3 per cent, has the closest contact to the target group, whereas only 0.4 per cent of illiterates are learning to read and write in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg. Furthermore, an enormous difference is evident between urban and rural areas in the provision of literacy (*see* Figure 6). In large cities there is a higher percentage of literacy courses than in rural areas. This implies of course that illiterates in these areas have a much smaller chance of attending a course. In these areas special efforts are obviously necessary in order to establish a suitable literacy programme.

Figure 6

Adult Education Institutes According to Size of Catchment Areas

(excluding penal institutions)



Source: Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle / Deutscher Volkshochschul Verband e.V. (DVV)

The results of the study show that most adult education institutes with literacy courses (about 80 per cent) cooperate with other institutions such as job centres, welfare offices, advice centres, workshops for the handicapped, social projects in particular urban areas, self-help groups etc. The plurality of co-operating bodies not only bears witness to the vision of the responsible organizer but also adds support to the notion that literacy needs the broad support of institutions and individuals having contact with illiterates.

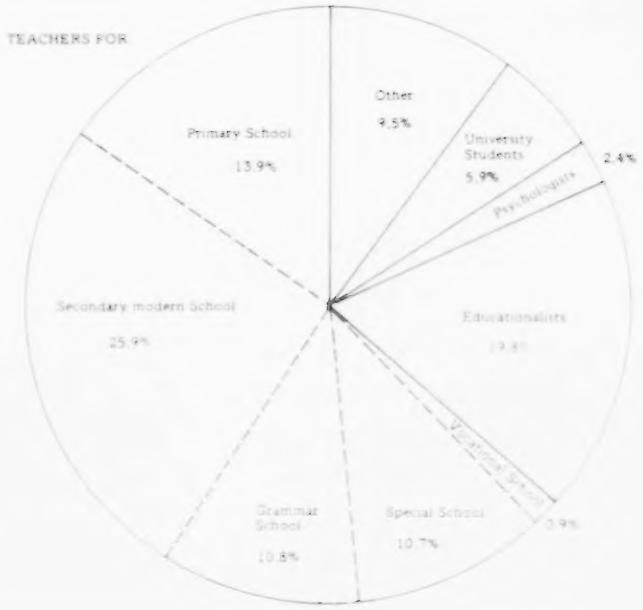
Nearly 30 per cent of adult education institutes offer additional classes for students enrolled in literacy courses. Classes in basic arithmetical operations are the most common, followed by ones in newspaper and booklet production and in preparing students for the taking of driving lessons. Free-time activities - educational, theatre and cinema visits, barbecue parties, bowling etc. - were also frequently organized, often in response to participants expressing the need to broaden their interests in addition to attending a literacy course.

The average number of students attending each literacy course is seven; however, there are some courses with as many as fifteen students to one animator. This situation reflects the range of opportunities offered by institutes whilst at the same time indicating the value placed by many institutes on learning in small groups. In 25 per cent of courses there are two or more animators. Fifty percent of courses entail three or four lessons per week; nearly 30 per cent entail one or two lessons. Courses with more than six lessons per week, in which unemployed illiterates can learn reading and writing in a shorter time, are an exception rather than a rule. With regard to course fees, more and more courses are provided free of charge or at reduced rates.

The number of animators has also increased in relation to the provision offered. Altogether, 663 animators were registered in spring 1985. Of these, 518 worked without a contract of employment, being paid by the hour. A further 58 animators have limited contracts.

Figure 7

Professional Qualifications of Animators



Source: Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle - Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV)

As far as professional qualification are concerned, the composition of the group of animators remained virtually unaltered in comparison with 1984 (Figure 7). Most are teachers, coming from a variety of school backgrounds, a fact reflected in the qualifications animators possess. In order to make use of the inevitable variety of teaching methods applied in courses and the varying attitudes towards learning procedures, it is important for animators to exchange experiences. Moreover, new knowledge and faculties are required to complement existing

qualifications, necessitating therefore more differentiated forms of in-service training.

In the course of time penal institutions have become increasingly interested in the results of the literacy project and in obtaining materials and help for developing their teaching. The ideas which emanate from literacy courses in adult education institutes cannot be applied directly to the special circumstances which prevail in penal institutions. For this reason a brief questionnaire was worked out especially for the study in 1985. Fifty-five literacy courses with 265 detainees were registered in 31 penal institutions. An average of five detainees followed each course, and 36 per cent of the courses were tutored by two animators. Twenty-six institutions, a remarkably large proportion, offered additional courses such as ones in basic arithmetical operations (offered in 22 institutions) and school and vocational training (offered in 19 institutions).

Summarizing the results of the study, the following two main conclusions can be drawn:

(1) Literacy provision in the FRG has grown rapidly, although there are significant differences between urban and rural areas.

With regard to rural areas, special efforts are required in order to bring about an adequate level of provision, e.g. adult education institutes cooperating together thus achieving a division of labour; urban projects being applied to the rural setting. Both help to make the difficult task of the organizer for a rural area that much easier, no matter how committed he may be.

(2) Along with this growth in literacy provision has come qualitative improvement in respect of the conditions for illiterates.

The large number of literacy courses with more than one animator, the small learning groups and the provision of additional courses underline the improvement that has been made. However, to guarantee an effective, consistent and long-term literacy programme more full-time animators are needed.

2. Major Operational Elements of the Adult Literacy Programme in the FRG

What are the major operational elements of an adult literacy programme in a developed country? Experience gained from work in the FRG has shown that certain factors must be taken into account whenever a programme is initiated. Of paramount importance is the need to understand the difficult situation of illiterates living in a society in which reading and writing skills are taken for granted. Furthermore, professional as well as personal opportunities are adversely affected to some degree. However, it is not just the everyday routine of the individual's life that needs to be considered. An individual's biography, social development and learning experience are influenced to a great extent by illiteracy.

When literacy provision began, educators agreed that literacy was more than the mere acquisition of reading and writing skills.

> "Literacy is a process which comprises several elements, has a variety of dimensions, and requires various methods; educators need specific qualifications and competencies in order to provide the conditions for learning which are necessary for the target group." [1]

The assertion that adult literacy was more than the acquisition of reading and writing skills was merely a starting point, and since it was made it has been possible to determine more precisely the particular elements of the programme. These may be itemized as follows:

- Contact to students is one important element, for many people do not know that literacy provision exists.
- Initial advice is necessary to establish a base of confidence between animators and students.
- Because many students feel that reading and writing skills are only acquired during childhood, it is important to consider the learning situation of adult illiterates.
- Specific methods for teaching reading and writing are required.

- *Socio-pedagogical support* is necessary if students have problems in everyday life.
- Students need *counselling* in order to overcome problems during the learning process.

The discrete elements of the programme (Figure 8) are described in the sections which follow.

Figure 8

Major Operational Elements of the Adult Literacy Programme

Contact to students

The view is commonly held that reading and writing skills are acquired at school. Indeed, many people believe that all children are able to read and write at the age of seven or eight years, i.e. after one or two years of attending school. This is one reason why literacy provision for adults was not a part of general adult education programmes. When literacy provision began, a major problem was how to contact people who needed help but who did not normally participate in adult continuing education.

Providing access to adult education institutes was a difficult task. Because of their negative learning experience many illiterates had confidence neither in education nor in themselves. Another difficulty was that people who could not read or write were considered by others to be mentally handicapped. As a result of this prejudice, many illiterates felt themselves to be on the fringe of society, a situation which created a gulf between animators and the target group at the beginning.

To establish points of contact to students, educators had to work out new publicity leaflets, pictograms or designs. Animators, for their part, had to establish an information network among local authorities and arrange meetings with representatives of job centres, welfare offices, advisory services, etc. Furthermore, they had to inform the local press or radio stations of the provision that was being offered.

Initial Advice

Despite all these efforts, illiterates were often reluctant to take the first step towards a literacy course. Many wanted first to have information about the organization of the programme, who the educators were, fees etc. Moreover, they were afraid of meeting other students in the same situation or of being recognized by people attending different courses in the same building. Counselling before or at the beginning of a course therefore became one element of the programme.

During this initial contact students were able to gain a first impression of the institute and the animators. They learned that the acquisition of reading and writing skills was part of a two- or three-year programme, and were informed by the adviser not only about general conditions, but also about

Bildungszentrum der Stadt Nürnberg

LESEN UND SCHREIBEN LERNEN

Leaflet of the Centre for Education of the City of Nurnberg

specific activities such as reading workshops or student newspapers. Furthermore, students learned that adult education differed from that provided at school in a number of ways: there was no fixed curriculum; animators tried to respond to the individuals needs of the students; work was carried out in small groups of roughly six students, etc.

Counselling was organized along various lines at the beginning of the programme. In some institutes there were special advisers who established initial contact with students. In others, the animators themselves gave information about the details of the programme. The exchange of information during the initial contact has of course important consequences for students as well as animators. Generally speaking, this initial contact marks the beginning of an orientation towards the specific needs of the students.

Animators must take into account several important factors which pertain to the learning situation of adults and adult illiterates in particular. Firstly, there is the fact that adults have experienced different forms of learning whilst at school. Secondly, there are the difficult social conditions under which adult illiterates live, nurtured by the pressure everyday life exerts on the illiterate individual. Thirdly, there are the motivational aspects which derive from the personal and professional ambitions of the illiterate. A favourable learning environment requires a variety of elements, e.g. discussions on topics such as the importance of reading and writing, negative school experience, social problems caused by illiteracy, the new learning process, etc. On first coming to literacy courses many students feel inferior owing to their lack of reading and writing skills, and their failure to learn them whilst at school has a major influence in their attitude towards institutes of adult education. The animator must take heed of these perceptions of failure and the resultant feelings of inferiority. In his practical work, he must steer clear of situations which might evoke this sense of failure. The only way to reduce anxiety and to build self-confidence is to strive for openness in the learning situation, on both affective and cognitive levels.

Specific Methods

When literacy programmes began, animators sought teaching methods which took into account:

- the situation of adult learners
- the peculiarities of the German language
- the aspect of motivation
- the wide range of knowledge of the learners and individual difficulties.

At the beginning, however, a number of attempts were made in the FRG to adopt the approaches of literacy campaigns in Central or Latin America. Unfortunately, these attempts proved largely unsuccessful because of the somewhat different working conditions between the countries in question. For example, the use of key words, which reflect particular events in the everyday lives of students and thus serve, in line with the thinking of Paolo Freire, as a starting point for writing and reading experience, depends largely on whether groups of students are homogeneous in respect of the conditions under which they live. Experience from adult education institutes in the FRG has shown that such homogeneous groups are uncommon. In some cases, a group will comprise of members of different ethnic minorities. In others, students may come from a wide range of professional backgrounds or have a variety of interests. The fact that a broad literacy campaign is not in operation is a reason why homogeneous groups are infrequently found. Most of the courses are attended by students whose conditions of life differ as well as their aspirations.

Nevertheless, the experiences of Central and Latin American countries as well as those of the United Kingdom and The Netherlands were a stimulating influence for the literacy campaign in the FRG. However, in view of the fact that dissimilarities existed in the educational conditions, the social and political basis or the linguistic situation, it was impracticable simply to adopt methods which had been used elsewhere.

The development of specific methods was influenced by three factors. Firstly, there was the linguistic aspect of learning. Many of the students did not conceive of language as a complex system with certain regularities, seeing it only as an accumulation of words or forms. The basic concept underlying

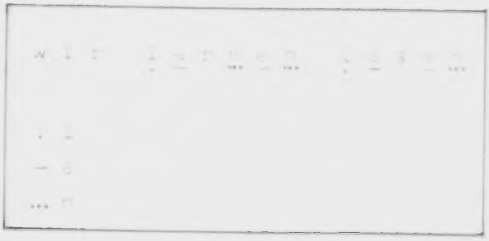
the linguistic aspect of learning is that students can master the language system just as well as they have already mastered other social or technical skills. The transfer of knowledge and skills can help in the analysis of difficult texts or in combining linguistic units into words or sentences. Secondly, there is the communicative aspect of learning. The basic idea is that persons with limited reading and writing skills should be motivated to communicate with others by reading and writing short texts, single words, etc. Thirdly, there is the development and the training of particular skills such as the differentiation of similar letters, the identification of letters in a word, etc.

Three methodological approaches emerged from the different aspects of learning:

- the systematic approach
- the language experience approach
- the approach based on the training of particular skills.

The systematic approach. Largely influenced by structural linguistics in general, this approach is based primarily on research in phonology and morphology. The distinction between *langue* and *parole*, i.e. between the system of language and particular speech acts, as defined in F. de Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*, serves as a starting point for the systematic approach. Structural aspects of the language are a means of demonstrating that a text or a word is a chain of elements. Which elements are important at the beginning depends on the student's knowledge.

The systematic approach can be helpful for identifying letters when a student knows only very few letters:



Such an approach also enables a learner's attention to be drawn to a specific grapheme or phoneme which occurs regularly:

Fuchs-Brüninghoff, E./Kreft, W./Waldmann, D. (1985): Alphabetisierung. Arbeitshilfen für die Praxis. Bonn – Frankfurt p. 56

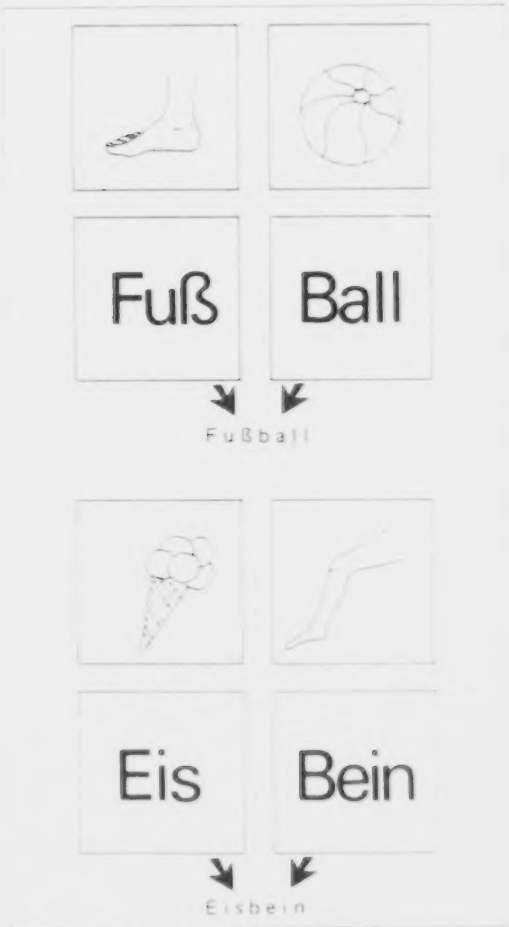
To improve the reading and writing skills of students who already have a basic knowledge of letters, the animator can use other elements. In German, for example, many words are compositions of several other words, as in:

H o l z b a n k

F u ß b a l l

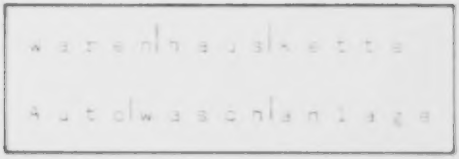
E i s b e i n

Fuchs-Brüninghoff, E./Kreft, W./Waldmann, D. (1985). Alphabetisierung. Arbeitshilfen für die Praxis. Bonn – Frankfurt p. 38

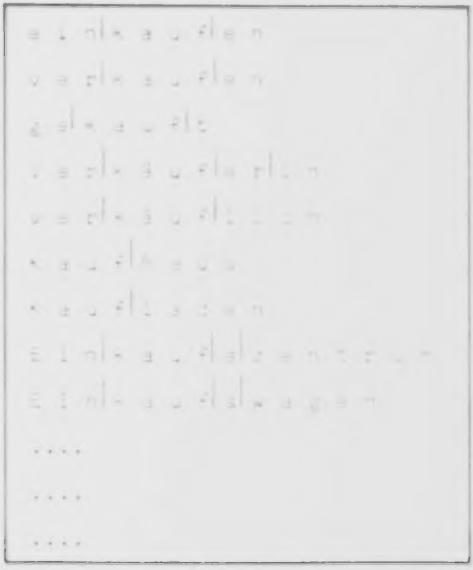


Fuchs-Brüninghoff, E./Kreft, W./Waldmann, D. (1985): Alphabetisierung. Arbeitshilfen für die Praxis. Bonn – Frankfurt p. 39

Compositions of words with two or even more elements occur very frequently:



Another way of systematizing language is through morphemes. The smallest meaningful units of a language, morphemes occur in many words. The root *kauf*, which is part of the word *kaufen* ('to buy'), is a meaningful unit in the following words:



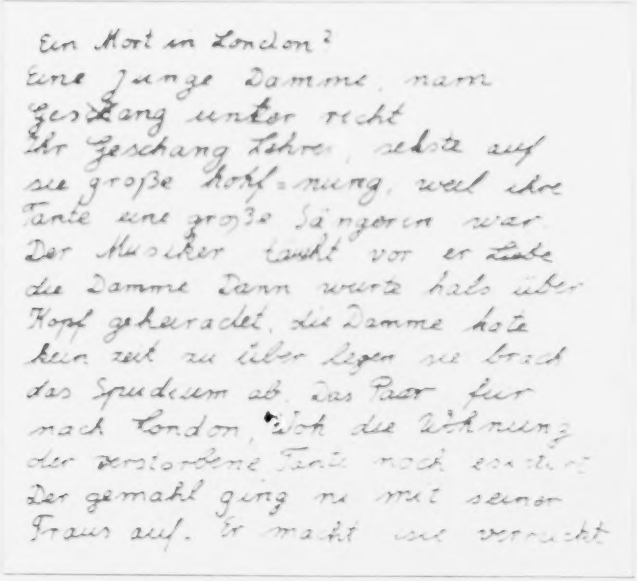
The high frequency of these units and the fact that the spelling is more or less constant can help the student to identify and to remember these units within a longer 'composition word'. Thus, structural aspects of language and stages in the learning process complement one another. With a small number of elements at their disposal, students can go on to read or write a few everyday words.

The language experience approach. Based on speech act analysis, this approach emphasizes the possibilities of acting and reacting to and by means of written information. The student's own experience of communication is the starting point for subsequent work. A person communicates with others by leaving a note on a piece of paper or writing a brief message

Fuchs Brüninghoff, E./Kreft, W./Waldmann, D. (1985): Alphabetisierung. Arbeitshilfen für die Praxis. Bonn – Frankfurt p. 46

on a greetings card. Students describe their place of work or situations in their family life. An example of combined reading and writing activities is a unit entitled 'Television'. Students and animators name their favourite TV programmes, write the titles down, look at the TV programme guide, read the short descriptions, change or complement the descriptions, etc. Inspired by detective films, for example, students might write down short texts.

The text below contains a large number of mistakes; for the student who wrote it, this text is a further step towards communication by written messages.



Ein Mort in London?
Eine junge Damme, nann
Ges Lang unter recht
Ihr Geschang Lhore, sebte auf
sie groβe Kopf=nung, weil ihre
Tante eine groβe Sängerin war.
Der Musiker taucht vor er Liebe
die Damme Dann wurde halo über
Kopf geheiradet, die Damme hate
kein zeit zu über legen sie brach
das Spudeum ab. Das Paar fuer
nach London, Woh die Wohnung
der verstorbene Tante noch existiert
Der gemahl ging es mit seiner
Frau auf. Er macht sie verrucht

Adamczak, C. (1984). Darstellung einer Unterrichtseinheit zum Thema Fernsehen. In: Methoden und Materialien zur Schriftsprachenaneignung. Bonn – Frankfurt. p. 91

Emphasizing the student's experience of the need for written messages, animators use authentic material such as excerpts from newspapers, forms, cards, etc.

Developmental psychology has shown that skills are acquired in stages. The child's development from very early stages of perception towards the acquisition of specific skills has been analyzed by a number of scientists, such as Piaget, Galperin, Wygotski, Leontev, etc. Adult literacy must deal with the problem of the lack of certain cognitive achievements: some students are not able to differentiate between similar graphemes; sometimes they are unable to link letters, or assign phonemes to graphemes.

The training of particular skills is necessary in order that students can master the kinds of difficulties mentioned above. During this training it is important to observe the sequence of training items on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to integrate the training unit into the programme. A typical sequence consists of the following items:

A) STUDENTS LISTEN TO A WORD AND FIND THE PHONEMES

B) STUDENTS ASSIGN PHONEMES TO GRAPHEMES

C) STUDENTS WRITE DOWN SINGLE GRAPHEMES

D) STUDENTS RECOGNIZE THE SAME GRAPHEMES IN WRITTEN MESSAGES.

This sequence is integrated into the programme in that students are given specific problems concerning a combination of phonemes.

It may happen that students confuse the same graphemes after a certain period of time. In this case, the training sequence can be shortened:

A-B) THE STUDENTS ALREADY KNOW THE PHONEME AND THEY ASSIGN IT TO A GRAPHEME

C) STUDENTS WRITE DOWN THE GRAPHEME

D) STUDENTS RECOGNIZE THE SAME GRAPHEMES.

Socio-pedagogical Support

Socio-pedagogical support derives from the fact that most students do not possess the basic skills in reading and writing necessary for coping with everyday tasks such as writing letters, filling in forms at the post office, completing applications for state benefits, or indeed for understanding written information in general. The anxiety this creates can be added to the concern illiterates feel in respect of the depressed situation in the labour market, and leads students to believe that they are incapable of improving their situation.

Animators seek to respond to students' problems not only by giving advice, but also by accompanying students to post offices, welfare offices and the like. It is necessary, therefore, that animators have a certain amount of previous experience and contact to institutions which can provide further information.

Socio-pedagogical support is not only problematic on account of the variety of approaches such work entails, it can also create conflicts between the animator and the student. Once the animator offers support to the student, he is often the only person the student can relate to. In this situation support has to be provided, but it is also necessary for the animator to convince the student that he must take personal responsibility for his own actions.Socio-pedagogical support, seen as practical help, is therefore closely related to educational counselling.

Counselling

Becoming more independent is a major psychological problem for students. However, the fact that they have started to attend a literacy course is a first step towards increased self-confidence, for they have chosen to accept support from others and thereby break their isolation.

Implicit in this first step is the student's re-examination of his self-concept, one which up to this time has been dominated by a general lack of self-confidence, the fear of being found out to be illiterate, and an underestimation of one's learning abilities as a result of previous negative learning experiences at school. This set of inhibitions does

not simply disappear once a literacy programme gets under way.

Furthermore, the fact that students take up learning again produces a dual effect: a general development of self-confidence is clearly evident, e.g. students write down words of their own or understand a written message for the first time; at the same time, however, the learning situation evokes in students memories of the negative experiences of their childhood and adolescence. In many cases this disrupts the learning process. Indeed, sometimes students reach an impasse and reject the suggestions and help offered by other students or by animators.

Educational counselling has two functions: with respect to previous experience, students can be made aware of the connection between their low self-esteem and the often extremely negative reactions from other persons in their family, at school or elsewhere; with respect to their present learning situation, students can be encouraged to identify positive and negative factors which affect learning. The relationship with other students or with animators may be one source of difficulty. Other problems may arise from the students' personal or professional circumstances. To assess the learning situation, students and animators must locate both the development of the process (What has been learnt? What are the aspirations for the future in this respect?) and the influencing factors (Are there personal problems? What is the situation in the group like?).

3. Working Materials and Class Practice

An effective literacy programme consists of various elements, which derive from the specific difficulties and needs of the target group. This variety of elements is reflected in both *working materials* and *class practice*. While animators and students are responsible for the choice of materials and topics in a particular literacy course, the institution decides on the organization of the course. In making this decision, pedagogical considerations as well as financial aspects are very important; sometimes, measures felt necessary cannot be implemented because of financial difficulties.

Working Materials

In comparison with the seventies, when only few literacy courses were provided, materials for literacy courses are now plentiful. A number of commercial publishers have brought out textbooks aimed at improving reading and writing skills. However, these presuppose both a learning process which follows a strict order of topics and exercises, and a relatively homogeneous group of learners which, as previously stated, does not occur very often. Most of the materials used in literacy courses are ones which have been devised jointly by students and animators themselves.

The problem, then, lies not so much in the availability of materials but rather in selecting or adapting them to the specific learning situations. The aim is to motivate students to think about the part reading and writing play in everyday life and to use and develop the range of their reading and writing skills for practical purposes.

It is obviously a difficult and nerve-racking experience for students to apply what they have learned during the course to everyday situations. Materials attempt to include aspects of the students' environment - this enables them to learn to deal with everyday matters in the 'protective' atmosphere of the literacy class. In following paragraphs the types of materials that have been developed in literacy courses are described.

One might expect that whatever adults usually read and write can be used for learning how to read and write. In principle this is true, but when using materials taken from everyday life it soon becomes obvious that such materials are often too difficult. In addition, what is learned as a result of using this sort of material might not be applicable to other situations. Materials must be chosen that can support the learning process. To assess how effective such material is, the context in which it is to be used needs to be examined closely. This context can be defined by the methodological approach of the teacher, by a particular situation which arises during the course, or by a content that is meaningful for the student.

When analyzing the types of materials used, we can distinguish between material that is orientated towards the form of written language and material that is geared to the social and

psychological background of students. In practice, no material totally neglects one of these aspects; the emphasis, however, can vary considerably. If too much emphasis is put on written language, it will be analyzed by the animator according to its structures. Subsequently, the material will be arranged in an order of increasing complexity, and finally, exercises will be tackled in a way thought logical by the animator. Matters of content and meaning are either totally neglected or taken into account only in so far as it is possible to subordinate them to the language structures that are to be practised. In this way literacy is reduced to conveying techniques of reading and writing.

This was roughly the situation at the beginning of literacy programmes, when reading and writing materials intended for primary schools were used in lessons with adult students. This approach resulted in isolating the process of learning how to read and to write; there was little or no reference to adults' experience of language and life. It was assumed that adult learners were aware of the situations in which they lacked reading and writing skills and that, once they had learned the techniques, they would apply them in everyday situations.

Material which emphasizes the *structure of language* must be seen in the context of the methodological approach adopted in the course. Depending on the qualifications of the students, the teacher can use aids such as letter-cases, letters made of plastic, cardboard or sandpaper, dictionaries or games. Together with the students he can file important work elements in a card index. There are several collections of worksheets that offer language structure exercises based on everyday topics, e.g. forms, instructions, warnings, cinema programmes, adverts. The majority of these worksheets are intended to stimulate teachers to produce their own material for and *with* the students.

The transition from material that assists the recognition of language structures to material that accentuates the *communicative* function of language is a smooth one. It has already been mentioned that it is not advisable to look only at the structural function of language, since adult illiterates in particular are confronted daily with the communicative function of the written language - from which they are excluded. The students' own environment offers a great number of opportunities for reading and writing. This material, simplified if necessary, can form an authentic basis for lessons. In addition, a large number of suggestions for the teacher can be found in the worksheet collections.

In order to illustrate the communicative context of language, it is essential that animators discuss with their students the differences between spoken and written language and the aspect of register. Only by being made aware of the relationship between register and situation or person addressed will students be able to express their own interests and ideas appropriately. This applies not only to the mastering of everyday tasks such as writing a letter to someone in authority, filling in forms, or reading instructions and notes. It is equally important that students come to see that through texts one can not only become acquainted with the experiences and ideas of other people, but one can also communicate one's own thoughts to others. Students are thus made aware of the written language as a *means of self-actualisation*. This applies to the receptive aspect, reading, as well as to the productive aspect, writing, since both can be used to achieve one's own goals e.g. for purposes of information, entertainment or simply dealing with everyday problems.

In order that this aspect be emphasized, magazines and booklets produced by the students themselves have been introduced in literacy courses in recent years. The magazines are usually published two or four times a year and can therefore treat current events and topical information. Their composition - items of information, reports, short stories, riddles, suggestions, recipes, etc. - varies greatly on account of both the large number of papers that have been published up till now and the interests and emphasis of each particular student group.

The transition from magazines to booklets is an easy one. The magazines put more emphasis on information, whereas booklets that have been produced so far deal with the students' own experience. Many of these booklets present a collection of several humorous and serious stories drawn from the students' lives, some centre around one single topic, some contain just a single, slightly longer story.

Magazines and booklets enrich literacy lessons in a number of ways. In the words of one teacher they are, "almost the only student-oriented texts that have been found so far that do not need modifying. Most 'adult' texts taken from newspapers and books are too difficult. Easy texts, e.g. from readers, are not transferable, since their content is not relevant." (5). Obviously these texts meet the demands of the students with respect to content and form. It is immensely important that these booklets are produced by students for other

students. What other students consider worth writing down has an immediate and obvious relevance. Certainly not every story can attract the interest of every reader, but with the large number of booklets available at present there is a wide choice. Booklets appear to be much more appropriate for learners than the usual 'adult' texts with respect to complexity, composition, sentence structure, and word choice. What else makes them different - apart from being 'more simple' - has yet to be researched.

The importance of magazines and booklets as working materials in a course can be better understood if these are seen as substitutes for 'real' newspapers and books. The reading of newspapers and books is of great importance in students' everyday lives, enabling them to generally become more involved in their work, the education of their children, and so on. Moreover, the use of magazines and booklets allows a significant part of real life into the course until the time is right for 'real' newspapers and books to be used. The students are thus able to try out newspapers and books at an early stage and explore the various areas of experience which are afforded by them. It must be borne in mind at this point that although many students have avoided printed media for years, they have at the same time realized the enormous benefit to be derived from their uninhibited use. In many cases this dichotomy serves to make it that much more difficult for illiterates to come to terms with printed media. It is clear that a literacy course must prepare and train students for an uninhibited use of such media.

When contemplating the use of students' magazines and booklets in a literacy course it is important to consider how newspapers and books themselves are normally used. First, there is the question of how to approach texts. This depends of course both on the area of application and on the reader's intention: seeking information, light reading, participation in other people's experiences, reading as an impetus for reflection, etc. Experienced readers will automatically adopt various approaches: they may read a book from beginning to end, or they may select certain parts; they may skim through a newspaper, scanning it for certain key words and phrases, or read a particular article more closely; they may read the table of contents and put aside a book or a magazine altogether. These various ways of approaching a text should be practised during a course - it cannot be taken for granted that all students know them or are familiar with them. Indeed, it might be argued that the development of such reading strategies should be one of the main objectives of

a literacy course.

Texts from students' magazines and booklets can serve as a starting point for work on the systematic aspects of language as well as for discussions, personal statements and creative writing tasks. The reading of booklets and magazines has often led to correspondence with the authors of texts or has provided the initiative for producing a new booklet or writing an article for an existing magazine or booklet. Up to now, booklets and magazines have only been looked at in terms of a finished product - it is equally important, particularly for the students involved, to consider how they are produced.

The high degree of motivation shown by students when producing a booklet can be explained partly by the fact that the texts are aimed at fulfilling a clear purpose. The final product will be meaningful to others (the potential readers) and may even be discussed by them. It would appear that the most fascinating aspect for the students involved is that they are creating a product which generates some sort of public response, a product that they themselves are only beginning to become familiar with.

If the booklet or magazine is produced by students to a stage where it is ready for printing, additional operations, e.g. providing photos and drawings, doing layouts, arranging the sequence of articles, become necessary; these may be carried out by students who, for whatever reasons, do not provide texts for the publication concerned.

Writing texts is anything but routine work for the students. It requires an attitude of 'having something to say', and thus is closely linked with the self-confidence of the student vis-à-vis the written language. "Writing down something about your own life, as you see it, demands that you look at it yourself, choose an appropriate form, and thereby expose yourself more to the criticism of others." (6). Writing texts therefore needs both adequate preparation during the course and encouragement to find things worth relating from students everyday lives, regardless of whether students' writing skills permit them to be written down or not. The following examples show what students regard as being worth reporting:

> "I am 39 years old and have written down two experiences that have played a major part in my life.

> Both experiences have been on my mind for a long time"..." I have selected events in my life that I will probably never forget"..." These stories deal with funny holiday experiences which we found very amusing. I hope that others will enjoy them as well".

Writing is seen as an opportunity to look more closely at events, to preserve them and to pass them on to other people with a specific intention. With the help of such records, facets of life about which little is known can be made accessible to readers (one example being, for example, a booklet produced in a prison). The opportunity students have to write down and pass on their experiences should be exploited more fully in future.

One further important aspect of booklets and magazines should be emphasized. Most of the booklets and magazines produced in the literacy courses of adult education institutes are financed by the institutions themselves. A booklet or magazine produced by students is a concrete outcome of the literacy course and enables the institution to give non-participants an insight into this area of work. It can be used as publicity to promote not only the literacy courses offered but also the work in general of the adult education institutes.

A somewhat detailed account has been given of the types of texts that have been written *by* students *for* students because we feel it particularly important to demonstrate that terms such as 'learner-orientated' and 'environment-related' can be realized in a literacy course by applying productive and receptive skills to texts written by students. This is the reason why the production and publication of brochures has been encouraged during our project "Entwicklung und Unterstützung von Maßnahmen zur muttersprachlichen Alphabetisierung an Volkshochschulen" from 1982 to 1985.

Magazines and booklets alone, however, are not sufficient to guarantee adult-, learner-, and environment-orientated literacy lessons. In order to ensure the transition from guided group learning to the tackling of 'real life' reading and writing tasks, to connect the use of language (as a system) with the conveying of personal experience, and to relate reading, writing and speaking to one another, magazines and booklets must be put in the context of a general concept of literacy education.

Two organizational aspects have proved particularly effective for literacy courses: learning in *small groups* and learning with *two animators*. While a minimum class size of ten to fifteen students is usual in adult education institutes, the average in literacy courses is only seven. Small groups are most conducive to the identification and remedying of individual learning difficulties. Individual tuition does not appear to be effective, even if in some cases students might prefer it. Students believe they are not capable of reading and writing, and that they are to blame for their problems - recognizing that they are in the same situation as many other people, however, helps them to develop new self-confidence.

Learning in a group therefore offers better opportunities for discussing and thereby reducing anxieties that have prevented students from using the reading and writing skills they already possess. By participating in group discussions students are more likely to gain an increasingly positive view of their own abilities and potential; this is essential for an adult learning the written language.

In order to meet these complex demands on the teaching situation it has proved successful to have two animators working together with a class. There is the further advantage that if there are problems with the personality or the way of teaching of one animator, a student can turn to the other. In most cases this prevents students from dropping out of the course.

Even if one animator leaves for a new job the learning process is not interrupted because the second animator can continue the course. Moreover, the training of the 'new' animator by the one who remains is relatively straightforward.

Working as a member of a team - providing this is successful - has advantages for the animator: the time needed for preparing lessons can be shared; the animator has more time during lessons to meet the demands of the students; problems can be shared and solutions found to students' learning difficulties; the stress involved in this type of work can be reduced. However, teamwork also has its negative aspects: if two animators are together for too long their established pattern of working may stifle any new developments; a much more unsatisfactory situation occurs if animators work together in a competitive and even aggressive way, for this can only obstruct the learning process

for students. To address such problems seminars and regular meetings of teachers working at the same institution or meetings on a regional level have been arranged and with good results. Additional seminars dealing with special topics at a theoretical and practical level should also be initiated. Apart from didactic and methodological questions, topics concerning the role and learning experiences of the animator can also be offered.

Experience in literacy courses has shown that teaching the required skills is not the major difficulty. The fact that students do not apply the skills they acquire during lessons in real-life situations is a much more difficult problem to solve. Since it is particularly important that the acquired skills are also used outside the 'protected' class situation, opportunities for doing so must be provided during course time.

Depending on the intensity of the tuition, a certain amount of such practice can be integrated into the normal course time. It will also be necessary to offer special courses, especially if the practice requires a lot of time or if not all students in a literacy course want to take part.

In most literacy courses students express the wish to do something as a group, e.g. going out for a meal, going to the cinema, going on excursions, having a barbecue evening. The desire to take part in group activities outside of the course is an important aspect, and one which applies to adult education courses in general. However, it must not be forgotten that certain free-time activities necessitate an ability to read. A visit to a restaurant, for example, is a problem if a person is unable to read the menu. A person is often only able to find out what film is on at the cinema if he can read the cinema programmes. A person wishing to use public transport must draw on often sophisticated reading skills. Consequently, many illiterates do not make use of a wide range of facilities because they are afraid of making fools of themselves - it is much easier for them to act within a group. Their fears allayed - if only partly - in this way, students can make use of the skills they have acquired and thus take the first step towards autonomous action.

In a number of cases where booklets and magazines are produced by students, a correspondence may develop with students involved in similar work in other areas of the country. Letters are exchanged which contain comments on booklets and magazines

that have been produced as well as suggestions and ideas for further work. Perhaps the most important aspect of the production of such materials is that illiterates 'appear in public' with their achievements.

Requests from students for particular learning opportunities can often be only partly catered for in most literacy courses. Some adult education institutes organize additional courses, provided that there is sufficient demand from students. Preparation for the taking of driving lessons, for example, is one area where even adults with basic reading and writing skills find it difficult to cope with the specialized vocabulary that is needed for acquiring a driving licence. Courses in consumer education are also frequently requested, with attention being paid not only to the reading of package labels and leaflets, but also to comparing and calculating prices and outgoings. A number of institutions offer courses in basic arithmetic, for which there seems to be an increasing demand. These supplementary courses are often the result of both students requests and the initiative of teachers acting on the perceived needs of the students.

The examples of additional courses described above are at the present time the exception rather than the rule, and their development varies in line with the diversity of institutions. It is still not yet clear how courses with these fairly incidental origins can be systematized and made an established component of adult education programmes.

4. Staff Development and Training

Since literacy is still a new field in adult education, there are no specially qualified staff available. Therefore it is necessary to put a lot of effort into staff development and training. Literacy personnel can be divided into two main groups: organizers and animators. Organizers are normally full-time members of staff of adult education institutes who are given the task of organizing literacy courses. Animators are mostly part-time workers, who are paid on the basis of lessons taught. Animators come from different professions, e.g. teachers, social workers, adult educators and psychologists; mostly they are unemployed teachers.

This wide range of professions raises the question of requisite skills and qualifications for literacy work. Experience

has shown that, in addition to an understanding of both the theory of language/learning and psychology and the possession of pedagogical and organizational abilities, literacy workers require the character to cope with what is very demanding work. Furthermore, to establish and maintain a well qualified team it is necessary first to select, then induct, train and give regular support to staff.

The Function of Training

Training has two main functions: improving the quality of work carried out with students, and improving and developing further literacy work in general. In concrete terms this will usually involve all or some of the following:

- a general introduction to the field of literacy
- the exchange of experiences with colleagues
- the conveying of new ideas and information
- help in finding answers to specific questions relating to training
- reflection on one's own work.

To take part in a training course, animators must leave their usual place of work, thus giving them the opportunity to reflect on their own activities from a certain distance: they are able to compare their work with that of colleagues, discuss ideas, questions and problems, learn about new teaching methods and relate them to their own work, etc.

A literacy animator who does not participate in training courses runs the risk of adopting a narrow and possibly dogmatic approach. In this respect he can be compared to the illiterate at the beginning of a course who thinks he is the only person having problems with reading and writing. An animator working in isolation may think that he is the only person who faces the many problems associated with this type of work: coping with the learning difficulties of students; accepting that progress is often slow; finding suitable materials; dealing with a group that is not homogeneous; failing to get on with certain members of the group.

An exchange of experiences is the first move away from such isolation. However, merely to exchange experiences without participating in training courses involves the danger that only complaints will be aired, leaving the finding of solutions to problems completely untouched.

The benefits to be derived from participation in training courses should serve to stress the importance of such courses at both local and national levels. Of course, if animators are unable to exchange experiences at an institutional or local level then they may wish to take advantage of nationally-organized courses. At these courses, however, there will be others who are able to exchange experiences in their own institution and are therefore primarily interested in the subject matter of the training course. These different requirements lead to time-consuming conflicts and discussions. Experience has shown that animators who are able to work in their particular institution with support and supervision from colleagues gain most from national training courses. These animators are able to apply what they learn to their own work and also pass on their new insight to their colleagues. For their part, organizers as well as those conducting training courses derive enormous benefit from the interaction made possible by such nationally-organized courses.

Training courses are intended to put across and disseminate new concepts of learning to read and write. Animators are introduced to these new concepts which they discuss and compare with their own work. During subsequent training courses animators receive feedback about the advantages and disadvantages of the new concepts, which in turn generates further ideas and hints for work in the future. Furthermore, training courses confront the animator with a variety of problems which occur in their day-to-day work with students. For example:

- Many students remain at the same level of achievement after participating in the course for a certain amount of time

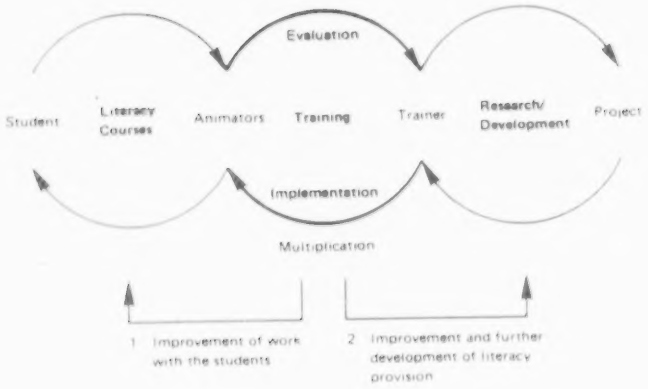
- A large number of students have problems in applying what they have learned to 'real-life' situations

- Most students do not only have problems with reading and writing but they also lack other basic skills such as numeracy.

A main function of training courses lies in the identification of practical problems, and courses have been held in all states of the FRG. Figure 9 shows the general correlation between the two main functions of training courses referred to at the beginning of this section.

Figure 9

Identification of the Problem



Source: Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle / Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV)

An important aspect of training with respect to linking theoretical knowledge with practical course work is the participation of animators in planning, executing and evaluating training courses and in developing new research and development fields.

Requirements and Needs of Training

Before describing the training programme of the National Literacy Project of the German Adult Education Association, it is necessary to consider the development of the concept. First, the training requirements and needs for practical work had to be identified. This was done by means of observations during courses, discussions with animators, organizers and others involved. A temporary concept was worked out on the basis of existing experiences of adult education and teacher training. This concept was refined after it had been pilot tested. After

revision and improvement the concept was applied once again. Each course finished with an evaluation by participants and course tutors. The results of the evaluation were taken into consideration for planning further courses with the same participants and with others. Thus a working process with ongoing correction was implemented (Figure 10).

Figure 10

Development of Training Concepts

Finding out training requirements and needs
Development of a concept
Finding out a practical organisational form
Selecting and qualifying trainers
Carrying out the training course
Evaluation

Source: Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle / Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV)

To explain what is meant by 'finding out training requirements and needs', one must consider the main activities involved in literacy work, namely *counselling*, *teaching* and *organising*.

Counselling

Counselling of students	- initial advice - training accompanying course - social-pedagogical assistance
Counselling of collaborators	- literacy animator training - cooperative training - cooperative pedagogical training

Institutional counselling	- improvement of social and organizational conditions - improvement of cooperation within individual institutions and between institutions having contact to students

Teaching

(For further explanation see 64 ff.)

Organizing

Setting up a literacy course	- recruiting students - public work - financing of the course - providing rooms - multiplicator contacts - providing activities accompanying the course
Coordinating the team	- selection and qualification of new animators - organizing of team conferences - providing of documentation equipment - organizing of training courses

These activities are interconnected to some extent, depending on the situation and the function of the animator, and require special training in the following fields:

- theory of language and learning
- didactics and methodology
- pedagogics and psychology
- organization
- personality and character.

The most important qualification pertains to the personal and pedagogical-psychological areas. It must be stressed that competence for work in literacy courses cannot be learned indirectly, but can only be gained through practical work combined with training.

The Training Programme of the National Literacy Project of the German Adult Education Association

On the basis of the requirements described and the needs of training, two kinds of training were developed at the beginning of the project:

- introductory training for new animators
- seminars with special topics for animators who have already been working for a longer period of time and who have finished their introductory training.

During the evaluation of this concept, which was a self-correcting working process, it soon became obvious that the development of a third kind of training was necessary: seminars enabling animators to reflect on their own personality in relation to their work. An experienced animator gave the following description of the correlation between factually and personally orientated training:

> "Nobody will dispute that new literacy workers in particular must acquire qualifications in the subject and share experiences with colleagues. Increasing experience does not reduce the importance of training, on the contrary: those who have been working in literacy for a long time are confronted with problems and difficulties of a particular kind. The duties of an animator are increasing, especially with respect to counselling students during the courses and recognizing and coping with learning problems. In view of these requirements the training emphasis moves away from factual towards personal aspects. It is common knowledge that an intact personal relationship between students and animators is the basis of a positive learning process. Therefore animators need to be able to reflect on their roles in the learning process with a certain amount of objectivity."

Our experience is that many of the learning difficulties faced by students cannot be resolved by teaching methods alone, for there are often deeper reasons for learning problems. Indeed, in some cases the history of learning difficulties of the illiterate has gone on for so long and been so wearing that it has acquired a dynamic of its own which cannot be halted by using new or different methods.

The training programme provided by the project can be seen in terms of (1) the participants - both new and experienced animators - and (2) the content - both special topics and personal aspects.

The training given to new animators is normally a combination of special topics and personal aspects ,that for experienced animators will be slanted towards a special topic or personal aspects of literacy work, depending on specific needs.

Introductory training has to be seen in addition to the general introduction to literacy work conducted under a local scheme and requiring a period of several months. Introductory training at a national level is carried out on two weekends from Friday afternoon to midday on Sunday. The new animators are given a general introduction to the major operational elements of literacy work. The content of the first weekend may include:

- target-group discussion
- animators' expectations with respect to learning
- animators' views on being a literacy teacher
- aims, tasks, practical work and literacy
- adult learning
- teaching a group.

The main point of the first weekend is to help the animators to gain an awareness of their own perception of their new work, of the special needs and difficulties of literacy students, and the meaning of literacy in general.

The second weekend focuses on methods of language teaching and producing working materials. It attempts to find answers to questions such as: How can a language experience approach be combined with a systematic approach? How can one cope with the different starting levels of students? How can students be made familiar with the nature of the learning process?

After participation in this introductory training, each animator must find out what kind of further training he/she will need. The individual training requirements depend on the profession for which the animator has trained (teacher, social worker, etc.) and the support available from the local scheme.

The aim of *training oriented towards special topics* is to give each animator the opportunity to choose the necessary subjects. The training could focus on one special aspect of

teaching such as assessment, or it could relate to a general question such as how to build up a support network for animators. The list of topics could also include:

- linguistic aspects of literacy
- methods of group teaching
- writing weekend for students
- counselling
- working with beginning readers
- using everyday materials.

The development of *training orientated towards personal aspects* is based on the following fundamental ideas:

- orientation towards students implies mastery of the didactic situation on the part of both course tutor and literacy animators

- reflection on one's own work represents the link between theoretical and practical knowledge

- in order to gain new insights into ways of dealing with various situations, it is important to consider positive and negative experiences

- actions must be goal directed

- the attitude to one's own learning history affects teaching and interaction with students.

In running the training orientated towards personal aspects there are two main points of emphasis: reflection on current work, and looking at one's own learning history and its relevance to teaching and counselling in literacy work.

These reference points are not mutually exclusive. Normally the animators start by analyzing their current work. When they have worked out the difficulties which exist in the interaction between themselves and the students, they will realize the extent to which their teaching and counselling is influenced by their own learning history.

With respect to reflection on current work, the following questions serve to lead animators towards an assessment of their own behaviour and get to know and try out new forms of communication with learners and with each other.

- How do I deal with my own feelings?

- How can I create the necessary distance to the students' problems in order to help them to find appropriate solutions, while at the same time retaining enough proximity in order to understand them, take them seriously and not treat them as 'cases'?

- How do I deal with the situation where the students' norms and values are in direct opposition to mine and are ones with which I strongly disagree?

- How do I deal with situations where students violently disagree with one another as a result of their differing norms?

- As an animator, I am responsible for the entire course and what happens in it - am I able to cope with this burden?

- Which subconscious behaviour patterns do I succumb to, e.g. when students want to force me to adopt a 'traditional' teacher's role?

- What function does my course group have for me? Am I going to become emotionally dependent? Am I afraid of 'losing' a favourite student to a school certificate course and therefore take no part in his/her subsequent independence?

With regard to looking at one's own learning history and its relevance to teaching and counselling in literacy work it is important to remember that, just as a student's negative self-image determines his/her circumstances in life and by extension the learning situation, so an animator's learning biography affects his current teaching and learning behaviour. Increased effectiveness therefore presupposes a conscious appropriation of his own learning biography. A further reason for the animator to come to terms with his own learning biography is if he wants to work with the students on a re-interpretation of their own self-image, which is often a prerequisite for successful literacy work. He must be able to tell from his own experience which fears, grounds for insecurity and hopes are linked to this sort of discussion with oneself.

Chapter 5

ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

1. Provision and Organization

Over the last few years considerable efforts have been made to organize a network of adult literacy provision in the Federal Republic of Germany. In the general context of adult education, however, literacy is still an area of development. On the macro-level, remarkable differences between urban districts and rural areas continue to exist. The lack of provision in several regions represents a challenge for the organization of adult literacy provision in coming years. Further important tasks will be to increase the number of institutes offering literacy provision and to balance out geographical differences.

It is a characteristic feature of the provision and organization of adult literacy that most of the programmes are run by institutes of the German Adult Education Association (DVV). There are approximately 900 institutes throughout the FRG, and almost one institute in three has integrated literacy into its programme. Furthermore, adult education is provided by other organizations such as social institutes, religious communities and trade unions. From an institutional point of view it will be necessary to promote efforts for literacy provision and to build up a network which is supported by different adult organizations.

A general expansion of provision will probably have a favourable effect on the situation of those illiterates in penal institutions. Several such institutions have initiated programmes in cooperation with adult education institutes, and in coming years these efforts must be intensified.

As for patterns of provision, one can observe modifica-

tions due to the integration of numeracy and other skills. Although provision is still concentrated on literacy, several institutes are planning to include basic skills provision in their programmes. The shift from literacy to basic skills is still taking place on a relatively low organizational level. In some cases, closer links have been established between literacy and programmes for vocational and prevocational training. This liaison is particularly helpful for the young unemployed or the long-term unemployed because of the difficulties these groups have in the labour market. The coordination of literacy or basic skills provision and vocational training programmes, however, is only one of a number of future requirements.

2. Animators and Other Personnel

In most adult education institutes literacy provision is dependent on the work of part-time staff. The majority of animators work on the basis of a two- or four-hour weekly contract. The pay is comparable to other branches within the programme of adult education provision. Some institutes pay for socio-pedagogical support or educational counselling, which mostly takes place outside class time.

A certain number of animators work on the basis of a one-year contract within the framework of the job creation programme of the Federal Office of Labour. Full-time literacy workers are still very scarce. The situation of part-time personnel and of persons with limited contracts is and will remain a very urgent problem. There are two main reasons why working conditions should be improved. On the one hand, successful learning depends largely on qualified persons who are able to respond to the various problems of illiterates; frequent changes of teaching personnel should therefore be avoided. On the other hand, the organization of programmes on a local or regional level, the assessment of provision, publicity and in-service training are integral elements of adult literacy which require long-term experience and a variety of qualifications.

Over a period of three years an important part of the training programme was run by the adult literacy project which was funded by the Ministry of Education and Science. Many people who are today involved in teaching and organizing have taken part in various training seminars. As the training programme was terminated at the end of 1985, it has been necessary not only to renew training opportunities but also to keep on persons who have had several years' experience of teaching and of other activities

concerning the organization of literacy programmes.

3. Publicity and Financing

Publicity for literacy provision is presently done on the local, the regional and the national level. Local institutes have tried to establish an information exchange network. Publicity leaflets, conferences, notices in newspapers etc. have served as a basis for the recruitment of students and for the information of local institutions and authorities about the problem of illiteracy. In many parts of the FRG, information and co-operation services are also being organized at the state level. Central information dissemination about the development of literacy, provision, research, new learning materials and surveys has been undertaken by the German Adult Education Association and by the Frankfurt-based Education Services Centre in particular.

The necessity to strengthen publicity activities has been underlined ever since the beginning of literacy provision. Contacts with press agencies and radio and television corporations have been established in order to improve the effects of publicity. As a result of these activities, there is now a better understanding of the problem of illiteracy in our society than there was five years ago. The process of understanding, which involves tolerance and acceptance, is a slow one. In a society in which illiterate persons are in a minority, tolerance, acceptance and the will to help are a prerequisite for future developments.

In the summer of 1986 a series of information spots was broadcast by several regional television stations of Channel 3. The snow-ball effect of mass communication, however, raises the question of financing the increasing demand for adult literacy provision. Up to now there has been no national funding of literacy provision and the decentralized nature of financing has made it difficult to assess the costs of literacy programmes in the FRG. Adult literacy provision is normally financed by each adult education institute. The entire budget for the institute is provided in turn by the community.

Literacy provision is a cost-intensive undertaking for each institute. Resources can be shifted around within different departments of an institute to a certain extent; however, greater publicity given to literacy provision creates the necessity of obtaining additional funding in order to provide programmes on a larger scale. As solutions have not been found to the

problem of funding, financial aspects threaten both the quality and the scale of provision. It is crucial that solutions be found not only at national but also at international levels.

4. Research and Development

At the end of 1982, the government of the FRG funded a research and development project. A team of three educationists at the Education Services Centre of the German Adult Education Association examined the various aspects of adult illiteracy, developed concepts for literacy provision and provided material and training opportunities. In close cooperation with the local adult education institutes, research and development focused on:

- the social and psychological conditions of illiterates in an industrialized country
- linguistic approaches and teaching methods for adults
- the development of concepts concerning operational elements of literacy programmes
- the development of animator training programmes
- evaluation and surveys.

This case study on functional illiteracy and literacy provision in developed countries is only one of the outcomes of the project. By means of various publications, training seminars, conferences, etc. it has been possible to give a certain amount of practical advice, map out areas of future research and development and initiate an exchange between individuals and teams working in literacy schemes.

One of the areas of present research and development concerns programmes for the acquisition of functional skills which include literacy as a part of general requirements and needs. Another focal point of the work is the analysis of learning problems which occur during the process of acquisition and the development of methods for educational counselling. The objective of counselling is to cope with a person's current problems and to foster learning abilities. Research is concentrated on the examination of appropriate approaches which can be used in animator training.

Concerning future prospects in the area of research and development, it will be necessary to analyze the changing educational needs brought about by social and technological developments in industrialized countries. Moreover, close cooperation is required between countries which are already highly industrialized and countries which are becoming increasingly influenced by industrial production and technological developments.

5. International Cooperation

In many developed countries the problem of illiteracy had long been either ignored or treated as a specific deficiency resulting from individual circumstances. This attitude changed when it became clear that illiteracy was a much more widespread problem than had been thought. Consideration of illiteracy as a social problem led to an exchange of proposals and concepts for literacy provision on a national scale and the establishment of links between organizations and individuals concerned with literacy in various countries. Further contacts and exchanges at an international level revealed the extent of the need for literacy and that different national approaches to provision were possible. A further step towards cooperation would be to examine different approaches and to improve concepts and programmes by exchanging assessments.

Experiences in various countries have also demonstrated that one cannot talk about illiteracy without considering the functional aspects of literacy in a given society. Students of different countries were not capable of mastering skills required particularly in periods of unemployment or rapid development. The question of how functional illiteracy is to be defined for developed countries must therefore be examined in the context of rapid social transformations, economic developments and modifications in attitudes and individual life style.

In this context it will be necessary to face the international influence which technology, modes of production and consumption as well as means of individual and mass communication exercise on the standards of knowledge and behaviour and on educational concepts and practice.

The problems of illiterate citizens in societies which tend to deny or refuse to recognize illiteracy are another focus of research which examines the relationship between social values and standards of a majority and the difficulties thus posed for the minority group.

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